






"THE THEATRE," JANUARY, 1896.



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MR. FORBES ROBERTSON & MRS. PATRICK CAMPBELL  
IN ROMEO AND JULIET.



# The Theatre

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# The Theatre,

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Other well-known names will shortly be added to the list.

It is intended that each number shall contain Portraits of two distinguished players until a better arrangement is made.

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# INDEX TO VOL. XXVII.

	PAGE		PAGE
Acting, English, in 1895 . . . . .	63	Female Comedy Writers . . . . .	328
Actor, an, on audiences . . . . .	249	Filippi, Miss Rosina, portrait and	
Actor's pet affectation, an . . . . .	126	memoir of . . . . .	219
Adams, Mr. Davenport, articles by		Financier, the, on the stage . . . . .	318
144, 273, 337		Fiske, Mr. Stephen, article by . . . . .	75
Adelphi Theatre, the, incident at . . . . .	183	Flying matinées . . . . .	119
Alboni, Mme., her will . . . . .	115	<i>Fool of the Family, the*</i> . . . . .	163
Anderson, Miss Mary, on her art 273, 371		<i>For the Crown*</i> . . . . .	220
Ashwell, Miss Lena, portrait and		Fyfe, Mr. Hamilton, article by . . . . .	203
memoir of . . . . .	90	<i>Gaffer Jarge*</i> . . . . .	103
Audiences, the rights of . . . . .	313	<i>Gay Parisienne, the*</i> . . . . .	291
Baird, Miss . . . . .	117, 308	<i>Geisha, the*</i> . . . . .	350
Barrett, Mr. Wilson, portrait of,		Gilbert, Mr. W. S., new opera by	
in <i>The Sign of the Cross</i> , and		222; anecdotes of . . . . .	369
memoir, 129; new play by . . . . .	91	<i>Godefroï and Yolande*</i> . . . . .	302
Beckett, Mr. Arthur à, article by		<i>Gossip*</i> . . . . .	228
31; his <i>Green Room Recollections</i> . . . . .	244	<i>Grand Duke, the*</i> . . . . .	222
Beringer, Miss Esme, portrait and		Green Room Club, history of the,	
memoir of . . . . .	283	(illustrated) . . . . .	17
Berlin, the Drama in		Grundy, Mr. Sydney, new play by,	
48, 106, 168, 231, 296, 358		97; articles by, 131, 196; as	
Bernhardt, Mme., in New York,		Cassandra . . . . .	203
174; anecdotes of, 115, 116, 180,		Hamilton, Mr. Henry . . . . .	117
307; book relating to, 368;		Hanbury, Miss Lily, portrait and	
pleads for an American Conser-		memoir of . . . . .	253
vatoire . . . . .	368	Hare, Mr. John, dinner to, 57; in	
<i>Biarritz*</i> . . . . .	290	America . . . . .	110, 308, 365
Bismarck, Prince . . . . .	311	Harris, Sir A., anecdote of . . . . .	59
Booth, Edwin, portrait of, as		Hatton, Miss Bessie . . . . .	120
Hamlet . . . . .	280	Hauk, Mme. . . . .	308
Brockbank, Mr. John, death of . . . . .	184	Hawkins, Mr. Frederick, articles by	
Buchanan, Mr. Robert, new play		<i>Hellé in Paris</i> . . . . .	356
by, 225; article by . . . . .	254	17, 211	
Burlesque, old v. new . . . . .	144	<i>Henry IV. and Falstaff</i> on the	
Burnand, Mr. F. C., articles by, . . . . .	6, 70	stage, 211; revival of, at the Hay-	
Calvé, Mme. . . . .	118	market Theatre . . . . .	344
Campbell, Mrs. Patrick, portrait		Hollingshead, Mr., article by . . . . .	257
and notice of as Juliet . . . . .	5	Houssaye, M. Arsène, death of,	
Cathcart, Mr. R., death of . . . . .	184	246; article upon . . . . .	271
Cecil, Mr. Arthur, death of . . . . .	309	Howard, Mr. Bronson . . . . .	56
Charity Matinées . . . . .	216	Howe, Mr., anecdote of, 62; death	
<i>Christmas Story, A*</i> . . . . .	113	of, 242; reminiscences of . . . . .	263
Church and Stage . . . . .	58	Hughes, Miss Annie, portrait	
<i>Cinderella*</i> . . . . .	103	and memoir of . . . . .	69
Claque, the . . . . .	259	Irving, Sir Henry, in New York,	
Comédie Française, the, and		52; his <i>King Arthur</i> , 53; enter-	
Napoleon I. . . . .	368	tained by the Lotos Club, 54, and	
<i>Comedy of Errors, the</i> , at Gray's		by the New York Press Club, 56;	
Inn . . . . .	31	his activity, 57; Uncle Sam's	
Copenhagen, the Drama in . . . . .	171	welcome to (a sketch) 56, 112;	
Coppée, M. François . . . . .	277	tribute to, from Mr. Jefferson	
Critic-dramatist, the . . . . .	116	61; his influence on the stage,	
Daly, Mr. Augustin, his mutilations		75, 239, 304, 363, 364; article	
of Shakspeare . . . . .	370	upon, in <i>New York Tribune</i> ,	
<i>Dangerous Ruffian, A*</i> . . . . .	43	112; in Philadelphia, 114; his	
Davey, Mr. Richard, articles by 12, 271		Shylock, 114, 176, 178, 305, 361;	
Davison, J. W., epigram upon . . . . .	243	in the South, 176-79; general	
Dawson, Mr. Stewart, death of . . . . .	245	character of his stage produc-	
Deadheads, the . . . . .	80	tions, 178; eulogises Edwin	
Dickens, Mr. Charles, articles by 21, 200		Booth's Hamlet, 179; in Chicago,	
<i>Divided Way, the*</i> . . . . .	41	238, 302; in Cincinnati, 239; at	
Dodson, Mr. J. E., in New York,		Detroit, 304; at Cleveland, 304;	
175, 237; dinner to, in New York	186	at Buffalo, 305; at Pittsburg,	
Drama, the serious, difficulties of . . . . .	200	361; in Philadelphia and Boston,	
Dramatic criticism in America . . . . .	373	362; his return visit to New	
Drama, the, in 1895. . . . .	1	York, 364; his <i>Macbeth</i> , 364;	
Dumas, the younger, his life-work,		tribute to, from Signora Duse,	
12; anecdotes of . . . . .	116	366; anecdotes of	
Duse, Signora, and the King of		57, 124, 179, 186, 241, 306, 307	
Sweden, 180; in New York	237, 241	Italy, the Drama in . . . . .	
Elliott, Mr. Henry, articles by 154, 328		49, 107, 172, 235, 299, 359	
Escott, Mr. Arthur, articles by 86, 259		<i>Ivanhoe</i> in Berlin . . . . .	48
Esmond, Mr. H. V., portrait and		<i>Jedbury Junior*</i> . . . . .	162
memoir of, 36; new play by . . . . .	41	Jefferson, Mr. and Sir Henry	
Eversfield, Mr. Harry, death of . . . . .	184	Irving, 186; anecdote of	212
Examiner of Plays, the . . . . .	310		
Fargueil, Mme. death of . . . . .	311		

	PAGE		PAGE
Jeffries, Miss Maud, portrait of in <i>The Sign of the Cross</i> , and notice . . . . .	129	Playgoer's Club, their annual dinner	181
Jo† . . . . .	371	Play-licensing, the ethics of . . .	254
Jones, Mr. H. A., new plays by . . .	95, 284	Pollock, Mr. W. H., article by . . .	321
Judic, Mme., tribute to . . . . .	373	<i>Prisoner of Zenda, the</i> * . . . . .	93
Keeley, Mrs., performance in honour of . . . . .	57	Provinces, the Drama in the, 46, 230,	294
Kendal, Mr. and Mrs. . . . . .	181, 294	<i>Q.Q.*</i> . . . . .	46
<i>Kitty Clive (Actress)*</i> . . . . .	45	Robertson, Mr. Forbes, portrait and notice of, as Romeo, 5 ;	181
Knight, Mr. Joseph, article by . . .	318	speech by . . . . .	101
Lackaye, Mr. . . . . .	374	<i>Robinson Crusoe*</i> . . . . .	101
<i>Late Mr. Castello, the</i> * . . . . .	97	<i>Rogue's Comedy, the</i> * . . . . .	284
Lawrence, Mr. W. J., article by . . .	83	<i>Romance of the Shopwalker, the</i> * . .	225
Leighton, Lord, his sympathy with the Drama . . . . .	180	<i>Rosemary*</i> . . . . .	347
Lewes, G. H., as dramatic critic . .	337	Rossi, Signor, his jubilee as an actor	241
London County Council, the, and the theatres . . . . .	183	Royalty and Theatre closing . . . .	154
<i>Lord and Lady Guildenoy*</i> . . . . .	294	Royalty Theatre, reminiscences of the . . . . .	6, 70
<i>Love in Idleness*</i> . . . . .	230	Rudall, Mr., death of . . . . .	310
Lucca, Mme., and Prince Bismarck .	60	Saintsbury, Mr. . . . . .	244
<i>Madame*</i> . . . . .	44	Sala, Mr., death of . . . . .	58
Madrid, the Drama in . . . . .	108, 173, 236, 300, 360	Sarcey, M., on "undressing" pieces	372
Maitland, Mr. Fuller, article by . .	140	Sardon, M. . . . .	116
<i>Manon Roland in Paris</i> . . . . .	357	Scott, Mr. Clement, his defence of Mr. Daly's mutilations of Shaks- pere, 182, 309; his criticism, 187, 308, 309; reprint of his notices of Sir Henry Irving's work at the Lyceum . . . . .	370
Mansfield, Mr. . . . . .	373	<i>Shades of Night*</i> . . . . .	227
<i>Marcelle in Paris</i> . . . . .	105	Shah, the, caricatured on the English stage . . . . .	368
Marching to our Doom . . . . .	131, 196	Shakspeare as a musician, 121; an original portrait of (illustrated) 137; a French view of, 208; cele- bration of his anniversary birth- day . . . . .	280
Marianne: a short story . . . . .	37	<i>Shamus O'Brien*</i> . . . . .	224
Marius, M., death of . . . . .	184	Sheridan, new biography of . . . .	332
<i>Mary Pennington, Spinster*</i> . . . .	354	<i>Sign of the Cross, the</i> * . . . 91, 129,	310
Mascagni, Signor, anecdote of, 123; attacks musical criticism, 186,	243	<i>Sin of St. Hulda, the</i> * . . . . .	287
Massenet, M., anecdote of . . . . .	246	Stage Swordmanship . . . . .	321
Matthews, Mr. Sant, death of . . . .	245	<i>Star of India, the</i> * . . . . .	285
<i>Matchmaker, A*</i> . . . . .	349	Stephens, Mrs., death of . . . . .	119
Maurice, Mr. Edmund, portrait and memoir of . . . . .	69	Stirling, Mrs., death of . . . . .	86
<i>Michael and his Lost Angel*</i> . . . .	95	Sullivan, Sir A., anecdote of, 123; new opera by . . . . .	222
Millard, Miss Evelyn, portrait and memoir of . . . . .	317	Sweden, the Drama in . . . . .	340
Modjeska, Mme. . . . .	180, 308	Terry, Miss Ellen, in New York, 57; her Guinevere, 53; her Portia, 176, 305, 362; letter from, 306; anecdote of, 307; her Lady Macbeth . . . . .	364
<i>Monsieur de Paris*</i> . . . . .	293	Terry, Miss Florence, death of . . .	243
Moore, Miss Eva, portrait and memoir of . . . . .	36	Thomas, M. Ambroise . . . . .	140
Morris, Miss Clara . . . . .	117	<i>Tommy Atkins*</i> . . . . .	102
Moscow decree, the . . . . .	368	Toole's Theatre . . . . .	181
<i>Mother of Three, A*</i> . . . . .	289	Toole, Mr. . . . . .	308
<i>Mr. versus Mrs.*</i> . . . . .	44	Tree, Mr., anecdote of, 122; as Falstaff . . . . .	344
Music in England . . . . .	184	<i>True Blue*</i> . . . . .	292
<i>My Astral Body*</i> . . . . .	353	Vaughan, Miss Kate, 257, 306; tribute to . . . . .	371
<i>New Baby, the</i> * . . . . .	353	Vienna, the Drama in . . . . .	51, 109, 169, 233, 298, 358
<i>New Barmaid, the</i> * . . . . .	165	Wagner, anecdote of . . . . .	372
Newton, Mr. H. Chance, article by .	150	Waring, Mr. H., lecture by . . . .	249
New York, the Drama in . . . . .	53, 110, 174, 237, 301, 364	Warner, Mr. Charles, portrait and memoir of . . . . .	343
<i>Night Out, A*</i> . . . . .	352	Warner, Miss Grace, portrait of . .	343
<i>On 'Change†</i> . . . . .	166	Watson, Mr. Malcolm, article by . .	216
<i>One of the Best*</i> . . . . .	98	<i>Woman's Reason, A*</i> . . . . .	100
Opera, English, at Drury Lane . . .	306	Wyndham, Mr. Charles, portrait and memoir of, 194; in a new part, 347; celebration of his twentieth year of management of the Cri- terion Theatre . . . . .	355
Opera, the, at Covent Garden . . .	346		
Pantomime, decadence of, 21; the "book" of the, 25; in the United States . . . . .	83		
Paris, the Drama in . . . . .	46, 105, 167, 230, 246, 295, 356		
Passion Play projected . . . . .	312		
Patti, Mme., anecdote of, 115; compliment to, from the Prince of Wales, 179; her life at Craig- y-Nos . . . . .	366		
Paucefort, Miss, death of . . . . .	118		
Pemberton, Mr. Edgar, articles by .	25, 137, 280		
<i>Philaster in Brussels</i> . . . . .	373		



# THE THEATRE.

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JANUARY, 1896.

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## Our Watch Tower.

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### THE PAST YEAR.

THE year 1895 will not be marked as an *annus mirabilis* in the history of the English stage. It has seen the production of a number of plays of average merit, acted with average talent; it has given us one or two which will live, and has witnessed a few—but only a few—performances that will be remembered. No new star has arisen to outshine in brilliancy those with which critical *lorgnettes* were already familiar a year ago. No new writer has done more than give promise of future success when experience shall have come to the succour of ability. The “problem play,” as it is ineptly called, still finds favour with certain audiences, though the flood of feeble imitations of Ibsen and Pinero has fortunately almost ceased to spread its shallow tides. The “romantic revival” that we hear so much about, but of which the signs are as yet few and doubtful, still awaits the impetus that would be given to it by the striking success of a piece of this class. The only form of entertainment that seems exactly to hit the taste of the majority of playgoers is “musical farce” of the *Shop Girl*, *Artist’s Model*, and *Gentleman Joe* type—pieces which have made a successful appeal to those who visit the theatre simply to be diverted, by means however inane, and to have their ear tickled by melodies composed on familiar music-hall and piano-organ lines. The long runs of such pieces may, of course, be accounted for by the inevitable swing of the pendulum. Just as the average electorate is inclined, when one political party has enjoyed the sweets of office for a space, to give the other side a turn, so has the average audience turned with relief from *Hedda Gabler* and *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* to the lightest of light music and the most fantastic, irresponsible farce. Here we shall not discuss how far the average audience is justified of its temporary choice

—we confine ourselves for the moment to a simple chronicle of what has been.

With the opening days of the year came the production that may fairly take rank as the event claiming foremost mention in such a review as this. In *King Arthur* Mr. Comyns Carr fashioned for the Lyceum a noble drama, full of romantic and human interest, treating the story in a manner that appealed directly to the heart, and giving to his interpreters opportunities of which they availed themselves to the full. The Arthur of Sir Henry Irving (whose knighthood, though, in a sense, the occurrence of the year of paramount importance and interest from a theatrical point of view, hardly falls within the view of the present article) was a performance of singular charm, dignity, and power, while Miss Ellen Terry and Mr. Forbes Robertson rendered him worthy support, and by their admirable acting helped to secure the immediate success of the play. It ran from January until the early summer, when *A Story of Waterloo* and *Don Quixote* were given. Sir Henry Irving's impersonations of Corporal Brewster and the Knight of La Mancha were events in his career; and the season at the Lyceum closed with a delightful series of revivals, by way of preparation for the American tour of our leading actor and his entire company.

Mr. Pinero stands admittedly far in advance of any other dramatic writer in England at the present time. Yet it must be confessed that the expectations aroused by *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* were only partially fulfilled by its successor, produced at the Garrick Theatre in March. *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* was without doubt a fine piece of literary work; but, in spite of the efforts of Mrs. Patrick Campbell and Mr. Forbes Robertson, it did not convince; and, though it dealt with a problem of singular interest, it was handled without sufficient boldness. The author seemed to shrink from enforcing the ideas which it suggested. A distinctly better play was *The Benefit of the Doubt*, given at the Comedy Theatre for the first time on October 16, a play which we hold to contain, on the whole, the most remarkable work Mr. Pinero has yet done—one that fully sustains his reputation and gives the greatest promise for his future. Admirably played by Miss Emery, Mr. Maude, Mr. Boyne, Miss Rose Leclerq, and the other members of a carefully chosen and clever cast, it has delighted all who can appreciate a good play and good acting, and brought back to Mr. Comyns Carr a measure of the prosperity denied to him earlier in the year. *A Leader of Men*, by "Charles E. D. Ward," fell far short of being a good play, though its undoubted cleverness amply justified its production, and showed that its author may be

expected to do excellent work in the future; but for *Delia Harding*, an adaptation from a play by M. Sardou, there was nothing whatever to be said.

*Trilby* dramatised bids fair to be as popular as Mr. Du Maurier's clever book. As a play, it cannot take very high rank; but it forms a successful entertainment, and gives Mr. Tree the opportunity he craves for—a study in strongly-marked *bizarre* characterisation. Neither Mr. Jones nor Mr. Grundy has increased his reputation. The former's *Triumph of the Philistines* gave Mr. Alexander, Mr. Waring, and Miss Nesville opportunities for good acting; but was otherwise a hasty, ill-considered work; while Mr. Grundy's *Slaves of the Ring* was quite unworthy of its author. Mr. G. W. Godfrey, after a long silence, spoke in *Vanity Fair*, for which Mrs. John Wood's amusing travesty of a *nouvelle riche* secured a fairly long run; and again in the *Misogynist*, a one-act piece, which gave Mr. Alexander a chance of assuming, for once, an old man's part. Mr. Carton has given us *The Home Secretary*, which has probably served its purpose, having run for some months; and an adaptation of *L'Ami des Femmes*, made to the order of Mr. Wyndham. Mr. Henry James's *Guy Domville* met with scant welcome, though, mounted as it was at the St. James's, it possessed for some few a charm that more successful productions have altogether lacked. It was succeeded by *The Importance of Being Earnest*, which, as well as *An Ideal Husband*, given, during Mr. Tree's absence in America, at the Haymarket, was from the pen of Mr. Oscar Wilde. The cleverness of these pieces—especially the former—only intensified the regret felt at the sudden and shameful interruption of the career of a man distinguished in more than one branch of letters. Mr. Esmond's plays, *Bogey* and *The Divided Way*, have given rise to a hope that in this young actor a dramatist of note may be discerned; they are certainly not without some justification who anticipate for him a distinguished future. Mr. Jerome's *Prude's Progress* was, without being a remarkable play, far better than his *Rise of Dick Halward*, which Mr. Willard produced when *Alabama*, the work of an American author and a play noticeable for many charming qualities, had failed to attract. *Her Advocate*, by Mr. Walter Frith, was too crude to be for long successful, and *The Manxman*, adapted from Mr. Hall Caine's highly-coloured romance, failed for much the same reason.

The traditions of melodrama have been well sustained by *Cheer, Boys, Cheer*, *The Swordsman's Daughter*, and two military plays, *Tommy Atkins* and *The Girl I Left Behind Me*; while for farces possessing more than average merit we have had *The Chili*



*Widow* (with which Mr. Arthur Bouchier began his career as manager) and *The Passport*. *Charley's Aunt* still continues its career, and *The New Boy* is once more filling the bill at the Vaudeville; the *Ladies' Idol* and *Poor Mr. Potton*, which followed it, having failed to attain much popularity. *The Strange Adventures of Miss Brown* is having a long run, in spite of its feebleness as a play, and Mr. F. Kerr's assumption of the reins of management is so far fully justified by his success. The most interesting revival of the year has undoubtedly been *Romeo and Juliet* at the Lyceum, for the moment in the hands of Mr. Forbes Robertson and his coadjutor, Mr. F. Harrison, with Mrs. Patrick Campbell as their leading lady. Of this production we speak elsewhere in the present number. *Fédora*, at the Haymarket, gave first to Mrs. Campbell and then to Mrs. Tree the opportunity to play a part that has a great attraction for actresses of note; and *The Rivals*, at the Court Theatre, is marked by the admirable acting of Mrs. John Wood, Mr. W. Farren, and Mr. Sydney Brough. Not only were we visited in the summer by Signora Duse and Madame Bernhardt, but also by the Saxe-Coburg troupe of comedians, whose performances excited no little attention as those of an almost ideal stock company working on old-fashioned lines; while the Théâtre de l'Œuvre, a semi-amateur French organisation, made an interesting, if not very successful, attempt to show London playgoers how Ibsen and Maeterlinck ought to be interpreted. Mr. Daly's inartistic mutilations of the *Midsummer Night's Dream* and the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* met with the contempt they deserved at the hands of all reverent admirers of Shakspeare, but this, unfortunately, has not hindered him from announcing that he intends to subject other plays to the same barbarous treatment.

Of the outlook for 1896 we cannot speak with much confidence. The "romantic revival" may be on its way, and, if it is, will be heartily welcomed when it arrives. Sooner or later, no doubt, the pendulum will swing back in the direction of a preference for clever and solid dramatic work to smartness and triviality. One cannot, however, record with anything but regret the fact that while "musical farces" hold the boards for as long, apparently, as managers care to let them run, the latest and, as we think, the finest work of our leading dramatist finds it difficult to attract full audiences after being played for barely two months.

## Portraits.

MR. FORBES ROBERTSON AND MRS. PATRICK CAMPBELL

AS ROMEO AND JULIET.

WHATEVER may be the varying opinions as to the Lyceum production, taken as whole, no one, we imagine, can fail to be moved to admiration by the beauty of the final scene in the tomb of the Capulets—by the tenderness and despair of Romeo, and by the awakening of Juliet from the trance, her agony of mind when her eyes fall upon her husband's lifeless body, and her passionate determination to follow him to the grave. Here we have both actor and actress at their best. Mrs. Campbell strikes the true note of tragic earnestness. The lighter side of the character of Juliet may, as we think it does, appeal to her with little cogency; but the passionate grief of a nature moved for the first time by love that has more in its elements of voluptuousness than of spirituality is portrayed with a fidelity and a poignancy that touch the well-springs of emotion, and reveal her as a mistress of at least one chord of genuine dramatic feeling. Nor is Mr. Forbes Robertson in any way wanting in the qualities demanded of Romeo if due effect is to be given to the long and difficult speech that precedes his death. No longer is Romeo the impetuous, love-sick boy of the earlier scenes, from which Mr. Forbes Robertson's ascetic appearance and refined manner steal somewhat of their force: misfortune has, with sudden rush of calamity, robbed him of his youth, changing him to a man of grim, fantastic humour, who gives way now to wild outbursts of grief, now to strange conceits and fancies, which plainly show disordered mind, wits run mad with woe. This impression Mr. Forbes Robertson conveys with unerring skill. The inspiration that he lacks in the earlier part of the play seems to serve him better here, and enables him to bring out to the full the romance, the poetry, and the sadness of the scene. It is with no little pleasure that we note the large popularity of Mr. Forbes Robertson's first venture as manager. That the representation is not, in our opinion, an ideal one we have said; but we nevertheless hold, as all who care for the best interests of the theatre must, that the true artistic effort which may be traced in the whole performance, and for which we have not looked to Mr. Forbes Robertson in vain, is well worthy of the traditions of the Lyceum, and is the best omen that could be desired of the spirit in which his future ventures will be undertaken to the lasting credit of our English stage.

## The Round Table.

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### REMINISCENCES OF THE ROYALTY.

By F. C. BURNAND.

#### I.

THE recent death of poor long-suffering Ada Cavendish (Mrs. Frank Marshall) recalls to my mind the time when I first met her at the Royalty Theatre. I have still in my collection a photograph of her as Venus with "her golden hair hanging down her back"—a most admirably deceptive wig. Her own hair was dark, and not luxuriant. She commenced her stage career as a pupil of Mrs. Selby's, with many other youthful aspirants for histrionic fame at that period, between 1855 and 1863; but how many of this lady's pupils achieved the highest honours awarded by the theatrical profession I am not in a position to state.

In those days, and in the Selby school, reading and writing were taken for granted, but good looks and some capacity for the stage were indispensable. Occasionally good money supplied the lack of good looks; with some, "their face was their fortune." A good appearance, coupled with a fair amount of intelligence, or natural sharpness in acquiring a knowledge of the stage, a parrot-like skill in imitating tones, and a fairly retentive memory, so that what was recited to the pupil in the professor's class could be remembered afterwards, thus making the memory to a certain extent supply defective education—such qualifications were indispensable in all cases, and were in their degree essential, even where money compensated for some physical and intellectual deficiencies. A clever girl-pupil who might come across obstacles when attempting to read a line of manuscript off-hand at first sight would possibly be able to remember how the instructor had given it; and when studying the lines given her, in company with another pupil—a friendly comrade better educated than herself—she would learn in a very short time, having an object in view, what, without a purpose, it would have taken her weeks to acquire.

Mrs. Charles Selby was undoubtedly a very good instructress for the stage; she troubled herself considerably about her pupils, in some of whom, quite apart from payment, she took a genuine artistic interest (as in the case of Ada Cavendish); while in all cases she worked quite as much for their



advantage as for her own. She seemed to me, as far as I knew anything of her, kind and considerate; and, looking back on her lessons, I am inclined to think she knew how to teach the "rudiments" of theatrical education, and so was thoroughly competent to start novices in their career. Mrs. Selby's "school" was in Dean-street, Soho, not far from the theatre: later on, I fancy, she held it, not regularly, but a class or classes occasionally, in the front part of the theatre itself, which in those days was a private house. A little bandbox of a place it was then: it was at one time known as Miss Kelly's Theatre, and had been fitfully opened for short runs, for the appearance of "novices," for private benefits, and for all sorts of amateur performances. When I first made its acquaintance, its rent was a mere trifle—not more, I believe, than six pounds a week, if so much; but like the cherry tree in the burlesque song, "it grew, and it grew, and it gre-e-ew," until, about ten years later, a would-be tenant could not get it for less than twenty-five pounds per week, if at that; which is not a bad jump up for any property, especially when, as I believe is the case, the value of house property in the neighbourhood has not risen at the same rate or in the same proportion.

But to return to the "pupils" whom I found being instructed by Mrs. Selby when that lady asked me to write for her, or rather for *them*, an extravaganza which should give her the chance of making a good show of her youthful disciples, among whom were two young ladies, the Misses Pelham, whose father, I believe, found the money for Mrs. Selby's venture at the Royalty, on condition, as Mrs. Selby more than hinted to me, of his daughters making their appearance among "the principals" in the cast. Very astutely did Mrs. Selby manage this, for, new to this sort of business, I had not an idea, at first, of the real state of affairs; nor did I know, till it came out on occasion at rehearsal, that the mistresses of the situation were the Misses Pelham, who, the next year, 1864, became *ipso facto* the manageresses of the theatre, with their names thus advertised in the bill, from which that of Mrs. Charles Selby in her managerial capacity had disappeared, though she still remained as one of the company, and, in a general way, superintended the business before and behind the curtain.

Miss Harriet Pelham, rather good-looking, possessed a contralto voice, but was as untrained in her singing as in her acting, improving in both by practice. Her sister would never have done anything on the stage with either voice, acting, or appearance; but she was a shrewd, sharp little woman, with an eye to business, and quite a match for anybody, where

of the house. I believe I personally got on very well with them. Perhaps I did, perhaps I didn't; I don't know. At all events, when they became manageresses they relied on my services for their supply of pieces, and for advice as to the casting; but who was their real manager and adviser I do not remember, and perhaps I never knew. Of course Mrs. Selby still appeared as, ostensibly, managing and advising. But practically I was stage manager, devising the very elementary and simple "business" of the burlesques in one act and five scenes, as was the fashion of burlesques at that period. Suffice it that everything I wanted done for my pieces *was* done; and if the prices paid to authors *then* had been the prices paid *now*, I should have been able to retire with a handsome fortune after my connection with the Royalty had ceased, and should not have had to trouble myself with any more work, *as* work, for the remainder of my existence, a statement which will give some sharp persons an opportunity for observing, "Then what a pity it is he did not make his fortune!"

The choice of a subject for extravaganza was left entirely to me. A classical story offered greater opportunities in the way of effective and economical costume, and of display of symmetry, than any other form of fanciful entertainment, that is, from the point of view of the manageress with an acute eye to the many things that would be provided for her patrons, a circumstance that in those, my early days of the drama, would never have entered into my head for a single moment, my one idea being to provide something to attract by its humour, its "business," its dancing, its songs, by its sharp lines *adaptandum*, "hits of the day," all presented in a brilliant setting, without any spice of *double entente* or anything which could have brought a blush to the cheek of "the young person." She didn't possess so much cheek as she does now-a-days, but perhaps a greater capacity for blushing. On Planché's delightful extravaganzas and Frank Talfourd's capital burlesques I had been brought up. At Eton, I fancy, I regarded Frank Talfourd (author of a burlesque on *Macbeth*, which he wrote, I believe, while he was still *in statu pupilaris*, and subsequently of several burlesques on classical subjects) as sharing with Maddison Morton the honour of representing the model comic drama of the period.

Certainly, in emulation of Talfourd, I chose D'Israeli's satirical novelette of *Ixion*, as when, starting in this line three years or so before, I had selected the Virgilian Dido, which, with Charles Young as the Queen of Carthage, had made so great a success as to attract the attention of Frederick Robson, then fresh from playing



Robert Brough's memorable *Medea*. But it was with the farce of "*B.B.*," written in collaboration with Montagu Williams (how delightful that collaboration! what a hard-working night we made of it! for it was done in a night, and at a single sitting, in Montagu's house), that I subsequently made "little Robson's" acquaintance; and, by the way, "*B.B.*" was taken to him hot from the collaborators by Montagu Williams' mother-in-law, Mrs. Keeley, who, still hale and hearty, has so recently been celebrating her ninetieth birthday. However, I am straying away from the *Royalty*, though at the *Royalty* I never should have arrived, and *Ixion* would never have got its chance, had it not been for these earlier pieces, all successes, and no failures, in spite of my first burlesque, *Dido*, having been rather unmercifully "slated" by more than one critic "of some importance."

"But this is another story." So Mrs. Charles Selby sent for me. I came; I wrote; I conquered. With not one of the company had I the slightest acquaintance; their names were, everyone of them, new to me, as I believe they themselves were new to the London public. There was little Felix Rogers, decidedly original: comically dry, with a mannerism of which I have been since occasionally reminded by the eccentric peculiarities of Mr. Arthur Roberts. He could sing sufficiently well and in tune; he could produce a high falsetto admirably; and his step-dancing was as neat as ever I saw. His wife, Miss Jenny Wilmore, was a pretty, sprightly little woman, the very type of the girl who played "boys' parts" in those days. The house took to her immediately she appeared, and she remained a favourite with the public for several seasons. She played *Ixion*, the title rôle; and her husband was inimitable as *Minerva*, a sort of classical Miss Trimmer. Felix Rogers literally brought the house down when *Minerva* suddenly interfered in a quarrel, and sang in a falsetto which made you tremble lest he should have broken for ever with his natural voice,

Let dogs delight  
To bark and bite  
For 'tis their nature to,

set to the then enormously popular air of "*E' scherzo od è follia*," from Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera*. Never shall I forget the roar of laughter that went up when Felix Rogers began singing these familiar lines from Dr. Watts' moral poems. It was encored over and over again; his falsetto never once failed him; and in his humorous repetitions of the verse there was, each time, some new point, which, I am informed, is what happens in the case of Mr. Arthur Roberts. As *Ganymede* appeared stout Joe Robins,

who had recently "gone on the stage;" but though between him and the celebrated low comedian, Edward Wright, there was so strong a facial resemblance that the latter used jokingly to say "he would cut him off with a shilling," yet did Joe Robins, on the stage, lack Wright's fun and humour. I say advisedly "on the stage," as Joe Robins was a very droll fellow off it. His fun was of the Albert Smithian medical student era, and he was great at such a clownish kind of practical joking that disappeared with Sothern, and is now and again revived and practised on the Stock Exchange. As Ganymede, Robins had little to do beyond "joining in," and this he managed with all the ability at his command. After Mr. and Mrs. Felix Rogers, "the pick of the basket" in acting and singing was undoubtedly David James, who made his first appearance at this theatre, if not his first in London, as Mercury. He possessed a very pretty tenor voice, and his skill in "singing seconds" could at that time only have been rivalled by an experienced Christy Minstrel. He gave his lines to perfection, and never lost a point, or allowed his audience to lose one, if he could help it. As to his dancing, it was very neat, quiet, and genuinely comic. As yet on the "spindle side" I have only mentioned Jenny Wilmore. Of course I ought to have commenced with the ladies. I have not done so, and in this I have followed the order of my recollection of it all; as, after Mrs. Selby, the first among the company whose acquaintance I made were Mr. and Mrs. Felix Rogers, then David James. Joe Robins I had known some years before. So, if you please, we will take a look at the queer little theatre, and after that, let us "join the ladies."

Such a queer little theatre! Not a theatre at all, judging from the exterior, but a private house belonging at some time or other to a nobleman fond of amateur theatricals, who, not requiring his stables, turned them and the entire back part of his town house into a theatre. I do not stop to search out its history; it is easily found, no doubt. But my old friend, Mr. Thomas Mowbray, long time its landlord, tells me he personally knows very little about the theatre in its earliest stages of existence—a prehistoric period—except that it ceased to be called "Miss Kelly's Theatre" in 1849; that it was bought by a Frenchman (name unremembered), who had it before the Selby management; that it was bought by aforesaid Thomas Mowbray in 1852; and that he held it until November 1, 1895, so that it has only quite recently passed out of his hands. Until this date those who were the advertised manageresses of it—it had never had a manager, but always a manageress—were Mr. Mowbray's tenants, or sub-tenants. It was for some time a veritable little gold mine; but I regret to say

that those who did the most for it seem to me to have got the least out of it. The time had not arrived when a dramatic author could really "make money" as he does to-day out of his successes. Dion Boucicault—actor, manager, and author—began the new system of either sharing or taking a percentage, which has worked so well for dramatic authors generally. This by the way, though I may have to recur to it when the story of the "Patty Oliver" period of the Royalty shall be told.

In 1863, except for the bills displayed in front of the house, and for a general "up-late-last-night" sort of appearance, you would never have guessed that the dingy old house in Dean-street was a theatre. The hall, with a big fire-place in it, was used as a booking office. The big fire-place, with a big fire in it, was most welcome to the box-keeperess in winter. The wide staircase led up to a spacious first floor, which, from a drawing-room, had been converted into a refreshment room, with bar and two or three small marble-topped tables. Here the learned and universally popular critic (and dramatist) John Oxenford, of *The Times*, used on first nights to hobnob with other critics, theatrical friends, and hangers-on, of whom he possessed not a few. Many critics were also dramatists in those days. Above this refreshment room was an upper storey, where all sorts of lumber was at one time stowed away—chiefly "properties," I fancy—until it was subsequently converted into a comfortable apartment for the manageress, after having, for some time, served the purpose of a saloon in which pupils could be heard, tried, passed, or condemned. The wide, old-fashioned stone staircase divided the front from the back of the house, and through the rooms at the back you entered into the theatre, the ground floor leading into the pit; from the first floor you went into the dress circle and boxes, and an upper staircase opened on to the gallery. I forget when the stalls were introduced. I fancy there were, from the first, two rows of stalls, which afterwards, as the house became fashionable, were developed into eight, or even ten, rows, and the pit was then extended in the direction of what would have originally been the back parlour. The cellars, back kitchen, and scullery were metamorphosed into dressing-rooms and property deposits, while the scenic artist (in my time Mr. Cuthbert, who has come out strongly since those early days) used to sit in a queer little sort of cabin, which he had somehow ingeniously managed to rig up for himself, where he used to sketch his designs at the greatest possible inconvenience, and where he could just manage to receive a visitor, if the visitor would have the goodness to stand outside, and be content to "just look in" for a chat. The stage door was in a mews at the back, and had evidently been the



entrance to, probably, a nobleman's spacious stable. Such an ingress and egress for the actors and actresses on rainy nights—the approach of cabs up the mews being impracticable—was enough to damp the spirit of any novices, and most of them at that time—that is, of the young ladies—were entirely “novices.” Considering what our theatres are at the latter end of “this so-called nineteenth century,” how comfortably—nay, even luxuriously—they are furnished and fitted, I regard the New Royalty of a quarter of a century ago as having been a severe “novitiate,” almost, if not quite, as bad in some respects as what, even now, has occasionally to be experienced by a youthful aspirant on tour, when the show happens to be in a small provincial town where the theatre is classed as “third-rate.”

Much has happened to the little Royalty since those days; but it certainly owes its present rank among metropolitan theatres to the first successful ventures of Mrs. Charles Selby, the Misses Pelham, and of Miss Oliver, who were my manageresses for some years. And now to return to the really great attractions, that is, the ladies of Mrs. Charles Selby's company, who helped to make the success of *Ixion* and the fortune of the little theatre in Dean-street, Soho.

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## ALEXANDER DUMAS THE YOUNGER.

BY RICHARD DAVEY.

WHEN, on the night of the 27th November, at the close of the first act of M. de Bornierz's new play, *Le Fils de l'Arétin*, the President of the French Republic rose and abruptly left his box, the audience, already informed that the worst was hourly anticipated, sorrowfully concluded that one of the most distinguished literary men and dramatists of the century, Alexander Dumas fils, was dead.

An eventful career had come to a close. The son of the immortal author of *Les Trois Mousquetaires* and *Monte Cristo* was born at Paris, 28th July, 1824. After a brilliant success at the Collège Bourbon, he accompanied his father on a tour through Spain and northern Africa. On his return to France, although he was only eighteen years of age, he published a curious work in six volumes, now almost forgotten, *Les Aventures de Quatre Femmes et d'un Perroquet*, which was read at the time with some interest, possibly because it was the work of the son of a popular writer rather than on account of any particular merit of its own. Young Dumas had, by the way, composed and published two years earlier, when he was sixteen, a volume of

verses entitled *Péchés de Jeunesse*, which contained several very remarkable lines. He soon, however, came to the conclusion that in the writing of romantic and imaginative work he was certain to be unfavourably compared with his father, and resolved to turn over a new leaf, and to become a realistic dramatist and novelist, thereby abandoning romanticism to his senior. Gifted with uncommonly accurate observation, he studied the manners and customs of the very mixed society into which he was thrown, and, above all, he did not hesitate to study himself, and thus analysed not only the faults and passions of others, but learnt to know himself and to understand the nature of his own passions and of his own foibles. The result was the publication, in 1848, of one of the most celebrated novels of the nineteenth century, *La Dame aux Camélias*. The success of this fascinating work was immediate and enormous, and soon the reputation of Alexander Dumas the son almost eclipsed that of Alexander Dumas the father. It is especially the preface to this work which is remarkable, as containing some of the most beautiful pages ever written by this profound thinker and master of the French language. In 1852 M. Dumas resolved to dramatise *La Dame aux Camélias*, but its performance was prohibited by M. Léon Faucher, then Minister of Public Instruction, who deemed it an apology for vice. Thought has advanced since then, and the end of the century takes its daughters, even in London, to see the divine Sarah die of consumption as Marguerite Gautier. In 1853 M. de Morny authorised the production of *La Dame aux Camélias*, and M<sup>me</sup>. Désirée Doche played to the life the unhappy but most sympathetic heroine. The public accepted the piece with an enthusiasm which knew no bounds ; but it was fully twenty-five years later before this remarkable play was passed by the Lord Chamberlain here. In 1853 *Diane de Lys*, in reality another apology for "soiled doves," was acted at the Vaudeville with great success, but with nothing like the enthusiasm which greeted the other piece. The third play produced by M. Dumas was *Le Demi-Monde*, recently revived in a translated form at the Criterion as *The Fringe of Society*. Then came *Le Père Prodigue*, an amusing comedy, which was very favourably received. In the midst of its success M. Dumas was taken ill from overwork, and was unable to resume his pen until 1864, when he produced *L'Ami des Femmes*, which was not a very great success on its first representation. Twenty-one years later, and in the very month of M. Dumas' death, it was revived, both in Paris and London, with every likelihood of proving one of the most attractive pieces of the current season. *L'Ami des Femmes*, needless to say, is the original of *The Squire of Dames*, the

delightful comedy which is at present attracting London to the Criterion. During the war of 1870, M. Dumas retired to Puy, near Dieppe, where his illustrious father died, and whence, during the Commune, he addressed to a leading paper of Rouen a series of remarkable political papers, *Lettre sur les Choses du Jour*. After the war he resumed his career as a dramatist, and was invariably successful. The mere enumeration of the names of his plays will suffice to recall to my readers many delightful evenings spent in witnessing them either in French or in translated versions. The most famous are *Le Père Prodigue*, *L'Ami des Femmes*, *Les Idées de Madame Aubray*, *La Princesse Georges*, *L'Affaire Clémenceau*, *La Femme de Claude*, *L'Etrangère*, *Monsieur Alphonse*, *La Princesse de Bagdad*, *Denise*, *Françillon*, and that *Route de Thèbes* to which he was putting the finishing touches at the time of his death, and which will probably be produced shortly at the Comédie Française. On the 30th January, 1874, M. Dumas was elected a Member of the Academy in the place of M. Le Pierre Lebrun. Among the distinguished men who held out the hand to him on this occasion was Victor Hugo, who had not set foot inside the Institute since his exile. He hurried forward to congratulate the son of his most distinguished rival as novelist and dramatist. M. Alexander Dumas' address to the Forty was a model of grace and wit. It was answered by M. d'Haussonville in a long and complimentary speech, which, however, was somewhat marred by a few acidulated references to *La Dame aux Camélias*, which the learned orator could not forbear seizing the opportunity of stigmatising as immoral. A few months later M. Dumas had an opportunity of retaliating, in his own delightful manner, when he had to deliver a speech at the Academy on the subject of "Prizes for Virtue and Moral Literature."

Such, in brief, has been the brilliant career of M. Dumas, who was in every way remarkable. His very origin was singular. By his father he was a son of Cham. His grandmother belonged to an old French Creole family, and his mother was a Jewess, who died a Roman Catholic. Probably it was due to the strong current of Asiatic and African blood which coursed through his veins that he never became a complete Frenchman. His work was not purely Parisian. It lacked Gallic spontaneity, and Dumas fils was never really popular on the boulevards. He was respected, but not liked; and his works influenced only audiences gathered within the walls of the theatres in which his plays were acted. Under the spell of his splendid dialogue, spoken by some of the finest actors in the world, the public applauded to the echo his cynicism, which



they sometimes mistook for drollery. On the other hand, his was always a great individuality. His immense head, only a size smaller than his father's, once seen could never be forgotten. "Who is that man," said I to a friend at one of those gatherings at the Academy, where all the world that thinks and writes in Paris assembles, "who has such a huge head, and reminds me of old Dumas père?" "That is his son," was the reply.

A few days afterwards I had the honour of being introduced to Alexander Dumas fils. I never beheld such a strange face. In it all kinds of races mingled on terms of equality. The shape and the colouring were distinctly—well, African, to put it politely; but the bridge of the nose was Semitic, the eyes were French, and the mouth was not closed like his father's by those thick lips, which recall only too forcibly the race of Cham. His dress was slovenly, and not scrupulously clean; but for all this, he bore about him the impress of being something more than a mere gentleman—a great man, who was perfectly well aware of the fact. The charm of his voice, the brilliance of his conversation, the geniality of his manner impressed me immensely, and the hour I passed in his company remains fixed in my memory as one of the most agreeable of my life. In an age and a country when a certain effeminacy of manner and thought have been adopted by only too many literary men, Alexander Dumas stood out strikingly as an incarnation of manliness and mental independence. The grip of his hand, the honesty of his voice, all confirmed the impression that he was one of those rare beings who are absolutely sincere. Our conversation did not turn upon theatrical affairs, but drifted into the loftier regions of theology. "I would die fifty deaths," said he, "if I could only honestly say that I believe in the Church in which I was born. But, somehow or other, Christianity does not quite satisfy me." Then he added: "My father lived and died a Catholic, and he was a much greater and cleverer man than I am. I have tried, God help me, to find the truth, but I only grope about in the dark, and when I think I touch it with my hand it slips away from me. Well, who knows? I am growing old; perhaps I shall die in the faith of my childhood, but—possibly not." The world knows that he died as he had lived during the greater part of his life, an Agnostic.

Alexander Dumas fils, by the amazing ardour of his nature, transformed dramatic literature, and at times converted the stage into a pulpit, for most of his plays are sermons in a dramatic form. Convinced that the world in which he lived in its passage from orthodoxy to modern freedom of thought was likely to fall into dangerous excesses, he sought in the majority of his plays

to impress upon his audiences the fatal consequences of a divergence from the right path. Unfortunately, he had not inspired authority to sustain him, and, by replacing the Divine Judge by a purely human one, he often missed his point. The delicacy of his touch, however, invariably saved his works from that degrading spirit of naturalism which disgraces the productions of so many of his later contemporaries. He did not hesitate to tear from love the glittering veils with which human egotism is only too apt to mask the most selfish of the strongest of human passions. He took up boldly the defence of the victims of love, of the deceived wife, the neglected mother, the fallen woman, and the illegitimate child. Needless here to enter into the controversy which was let loose all over Europe after the production of his celebrated pamphlet *Tue-la*, in which he advocated the right of a man to kill his unfaithful wife, and which he further illustrated in those singular plays, *La Femme de Claude* and *Les Idées de Madame Aubray*. He certainly managed to strike a higher key-note in the theatre than had possibly been heard there since the sixteenth century, and by his earnestness to impose upon his audiences the acceptance of graver subjects than they had been accustomed to, and even at times to force them to applaud speeches which not unfrequently savoured so much of the pulpit as to enable one of his most fervent admirers to say on one occasion that "had Alexander Dumas not been a great dramatist he would have been a great preacher." Notwithstanding the marvellous dexterity of his dramatic work, I cannot think that it will resist the action of time. I am afraid it is too full of actuality, too perfect a mirror of the society in which he moved, to interest future generations. Already the New Woman has relegated *La Dame aux Camélias* among the goody plays, and the world he described so graphically in *Le Demi-Monde* no longer resembles the half-world of our own. It is, unfortunately, no longer a case of peaches at 15 sous a basket; the price is ever so much lower to-day. Then the introduction of a divorce law in France has so modified the plots of several of his most celebrated plays as to render them unintelligible. The prefaces to his pieces are, if anything, much more remarkable than the plays they precede; they are full of profound and original thought. M. Dumas' novels are not of great value, and are rarely asked for even at the circulating libraries. Either he did not possess the talents required to make a brilliant novelist, or, what is still more probable, he felt himself so completely overshadowed by his father's celebrity and popularity in this line as to feel discouraged, and obliged, as I have already said, to strike out a new line for himself. Be this as it may, it is as a dramatist that he will







THE GREEN ROOM CLUB.

be remembered, and in his own way in this particular branch of literature he ranks among the few very great playwrights of the century.

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## THE GREEN ROOM CLUB.

BY FREDERICK HAWKINS.

I PROPOSE to touch upon the history of what has always been, and will probably long continue to be, the most representative theatrical club in this country. Indeed, the Green Room might almost be described as the only institution of the kind we have had, at least for many years in succession. The Garrick, founded by "patrons of the Drama" in the early thirties, soon fell into the error of becoming over-exclusive, and, while steadily increasing its collection of theatrical pictures, lost any distinctive character it may have been intended to assume. Presently, in order to fill the void thus left, a few players of credit and renown formed the Junior Garrick, which took up its quarters in the house at the eastern corner of Adelphi-terrace. For eight or nine years all went well, or seemed to go well, with it. Some of the cleverest men connected with the stage were to be found there—such men, for example, as James Albery, John Oxenford, and Henry J. Byron. To be sure of a seat at the Saturday dinner you usually had to ask for it several days before hand. Conspicuous in the drawing-room after this weekly function was Oxenford, always the centre of a throng of eager listeners. The author of the *London Spy*, describing Wills's coffee-house about two centuries ago, tells us that the beaux and wits were "conceited" if Mr. Dryden allowed them to dip a finger and thumb into his snuff-box. No less honour was shown at the Junior Garrick Club to the great dramatic critic of *The Times*—"another 'glorious John,'" as I used to call him. But the prosperity of the club was not to last more than a decade. Perpetual mismanagement involved it in difficulties; and the committee, as so many committees have done in like case, took refuge in the expedient of opening their doors to persons with few or no claims to admission. Mere counter-jumpers got into the club. The result need hardly be stated. If a well-known actor looked in he found himself stared at with open mouths—heard his name whispered about in a spirit of vulgar curiosity. In such circumstances it is not surprising that he should have kept away. Some of the members—I was one of them—tried to have the club reconstructed on a new basis, but without success. In the spring of 1877, at a general meeting, a majority decided to reappoint the committee under whose auspices we had come to

the verge of bankruptcy. This was the last straw. One night I supped at the club with Mr. Thomas Thorne, Mr. David James, and one or two more. Naturally enough, we talked of the deplorable turn affairs had taken. "Why," I asked, "should we not have a little club to ourselves; a club without outsiders; a club limited to the professions?"

In less than three months, as a result of this question, the Green Room Club, so called at the suggestion of Albery, came into existence on the ground floor of the house at the other corner of Adelphi-terrace. James and Thorne, enriched by the unexpected popularity of *Our Boys*, supplied no inconsiderable part of the money needed at the outset. We opened with a luncheon at the Criterion, the Duke of Beaufort, who had been induced by James, notoriously a lover of rank, to accept the presidency of the Club, taking the chair. In a pleasantly characteristic speech he wished us all success, and the toast of his health was proposed by one of the first batch of members, Henry Irving, the Garrick or Edmund Kean of our time. It had been decreed that the committee should consist of twelve actors—Mr. Irving, Mr. Toole, Mr. Byron, Mr. Wyndham, Mr. James, Mr. Thorne, Mr. Brough, Mr. Neville, Mr. Clayton, Mr. Righton, Mr. Billington, and Mr. Charles Harcourt—and six non-actors, the Hon. Lewis Wingfield, Captain Hawley Smart, Mr. Arthur Flaxman, Mr. John Hollingshead, Mr. Popham Pike, and Mr. Ernest Cuthbert, the last of whom acted as hon. secretary. Nearly all of these were present, together with Mr. Frank Marshall, Mr. Anderson Critchett, Mr. P. T. Duffy, Mr. Harry Loveday, Mr. Edmund Leathes, and many other good friends and true. The luncheon over, we strolled down by twos and threes to our new club home, where a pleasant surprise was in store for not a few of the company. Our one room—we have never had but one room—was as luxurious and cosy as anyone could wish. It had been decorated with the most artistic effect by a committee of taste—Mr. Wingfield, Mr. Murray Marks, and Mr. Forbes Robertson. On the walls hung a complete set of the Boydell engravings of Shakspeare, the gift of Mr. Marks. From the windows we could look upon the newly-made gardens, the imposing Embankment, and the bend of the river between St. Paul's and Westminster. Over our cigars and coffee, in the stillness of a perfect summer evening, some of us recalled the associations of the spot. Hard by lived Thomas Hill, the original of Paul Pry. Only a few yards away was the house in which Garrick died. In front of us was the scene of a touching incident recorded by Boswell. "Johnson and I," he writes, "walked away together. We stopped a little while by the rails of the Adelphi, looking on the Thames, and I



said to him, with some emotion, that I was now thinking of two friends we had lost who once lived in the buildings behind us—Beauclerk and Garrick. ‘Ay, sir,’ said he, tenderly, ‘and two such friends as cannot be supplied.’”

Fortune at first did not smile upon us; we got into debt, and the hat had to be passed round to keep us from extinction. Outwardly, however, our prospects were as bright as possible. Night after night we had the liveliest of gatherings. Someone—was it Mr. Burnand?—said that the whole theatrical world was just then suffering from green rheumatism. Men always delightful to meet and hear—Albery, Sothern, Byron, Toole, Pinero, Lionel Brough, Lord, Farjeon, Carton, Grossmith, Ashby-Sterry, Gerald Dixon, Hawley Smart, Wingfield, Righton, and Beerbohm Tree (not then on the stage)—were often to be found in the room. I remember one word-combat between Albery and Lord ending in the discomfiture of the latter, greatly as he prided himself upon his prowess in repartee. “Ah,” he said, “Jimmy carries too many guns for me.” Especially attractive were some Wednesday night suppers and concerts, over several of which Mr. Irving presided. Mr. Toole was a frequent visitor, and, besides entertaining us with his wealth of anecdote, was always ready for a harmless practical joke. Early one morning, at the doors, he asserted that the horse of a four-wheeler which he proposed to take “was not in a fit state.” The cabman, half asleep, angrily denied the impeachment. “No better ’oss,” he declared, had ever been seen in London streets. “We’ll see!” said Mr. Toole. “I’ll get in with my three friends here, and if you get along I’ll own I’m in the wrong.” Get along the horse could not, for the simple reason that about two dozen frivolous young gentlemen, tumbling to the joke in a moment, held on behind as hard as they could. “You see,” said Mr. Toole, gracefully alighting from the vehicle, “that the poor beast is as bad as I said. However, he may be able to carry two. Thorne, you and I’ll go together.” So they got in, taking care to slip out unperceived on the other side. Bang went the door; “Hyde-park,” someone shouted from behind, and the cabman drove off in the full belief that two passengers were inside. It is needless to add that treble fare awaited him when, in no very amiable mood, he called next day to make certain inquiries. Another little practical joke of those days may be recorded here. Mr. Thorne and Mr. James, who felt quite a paternal interest in the club, had gone away for a long summer holiday together, and were at Boulogne. Early one morning three of us concocted a telegram to them as coming from the manager. They were informed that everything had gone wrong; that the caterer had entered

the room with his hat on, refused to supply dinners, and otherwise lost his head; that the Duke of Beaufort, grievously affronted, had left the place in high dudgeon; that three or four members had formed an opposition, kept the place open until five a.m., and generally conducted themselves in a most refractory manner. What was to be done? In these trying circumstances Mr. James and Mr. Thorne showed a vigour and decision worthy of a Cromwell or a Napoleon. "Much grieved," they telegraphed, "at news. Sack caterer. Chops and steaks till we return. *Let Duke be apologised to.* Call committee meeting; see right men are there. Consult Pike (solicitor). Put out lights at proper time. Be firm!"

In 1884, after a temporary stay on the first floor at the corner of King-street, the club established itself in its present premises, 20, Bedford-street. By this time, thanks in a very large measure to the exertions and tact of a new honorary secretary, Mr. George A. Delacher—good fellow, musician, man of the world, inveterate first-nighter, and on terms of friendship with almost every distinguished player in London—it had not only got out of its former difficulties, pressing as they were, but had become as wealthy as a small club could well expect to be. The new Green Room, of which we give an illustration herewith, is remarkable for high oak panelling, a superbly carved mantelpiece, and a general scheme of early seventeenth century decoration. The old armchair on the left belonged to Garrick, and has been presented to the club by Mr. Hare. Other noteworthy gifts are a large mirror from Mr. Bancroft—now, by the way, our president; a clock from Mr. Pinero, a mezzotint from Mr. Henry Kisch, a Chippendale sideboard from Mr. Murray Marks, and two book-cases from Mr. Thorne and Mr. James. Originally fixed at one hundred and fifty, the number of members has risen to three hundred and twenty-five, exclusive of guests from abroad; and I am well within the limits of the truth in declaring that among these members are to be found nearly all the dramatists and players who of late years have done so much for the dignity, the prosperity, and the influence of the English stage. If a feeling of sadness now and then comes over the original member as he thinks of comrades who have passed away—of Byron, Alberty, Sothorn, Reece, Planché, Pettitt, Merritt, David James, Hawley Smart, E. L. Blanchard, Lewis Wingfield, Alfred Cellier, J. W. Davison, John Clayton, Charles Harcourt, Edmund Leathes, Arthur Matthison, and others we still delight to honour in our memories—he may find some consolation on finding himself in the company of Sir Henry Irving, Mr. Pinero, Mr. Toole, Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, Mr. Tree, Mr. Sydney Grundy, Mr. Willard,

Mr. B. L. Farjeon, Mr. Hare, Mr. Comyns Carr, Mr. Wyndham, Mr. Charles Dickens, Mr. William Terriss, Mr. Haddon Chambers, Mr. Alexander, Mr. George R. Sims, Mr. George Conquest, Mr. Edward Rose, Mr. Edward Rington, Mr. Malcolm Watson, or Sir Augustus Harris. And then we have a good contingent of that younger generation of actors who, educated for learned professions, have been attracted to the stage by the increased consideration which its votaries have received within the last quarter of a century — the Fultons, the Websters, the Warings, the Esmonds, and the Terrys. Formerly the Green Room was a night club; nowadays—except, of course, after an important first performance—it presents its liveliest appearance in the afternoon and early evening. Whatever the hour may be, we can always rely upon feeling completely at home. In no club has the spirit of good-fellowship been more amply shown. I, for one, can never think of it without affection, without a grateful recollection of countless hours of intellectual and social enjoyment. To nearly all of us, I am sure, it is what the Garrick was to Thackeray—"the G., the little G., the dearest place in the world."

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## ON THE DECADENCE OF PANTOMIME.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

THAT "the old order changeth, giving place to new," we all know so well that we seldom trouble ourselves at all about the matter, or give much thought to the alterations which are constantly obliterating old landmarks, destroying old illusions, and setting up strange new standards all around us in the familiar places which we once looked upon as almost secure against the incursions of time and change. It is only when we pause for a moment at some such season as this to take stock of the years which are slipping so rapidly by, and of all they have taken and are taking with them, that the vast difference between what is and what has been is fully recognised, and strikes us with quite an unpleasant shock of surprise.

Of course, the conditions of the past fifty years have been unusually and extraordinarily favourable to changes in the manner of life of mankind everywhere; but I venture to think that nowhere in the world have those changes been so thorough and so conspicuous, that nowhere have the manners and customs of a people—especially as regards that portion of their lives which is spent in public—altered so completely as in England. The national character may perhaps, in the main, still be pretty much



as it was in reference to the serious business of life—although the question is undoubtedly open to plenty of argument—but as regards their amusements and their relaxations, the English people of to-day are almost as different from the English people of five and twenty years ago as they, in turn, differed from their predecessors of the early part of the century. In fact, everything is altered out of all knowledge. Only a fairly long theatrical experience and a tolerably good memory are necessary to convince one of the extraordinary change which has taken place in the tastes of the theatre-going public; while an intelligent observation of what is constantly going on in this direction cannot fail to show that the process has not only by no means come to an end, but is not in the least likely to do so. Indeed, it seems sometimes hardly worth while to argue so hotly as we all do now and then about the merits or demerits of this or that school of drama, or of the probable effect of this or the other form of dramatic education on the public mind, seeing that we know by experience that in half a dozen years or so at most the ever-shifting sands of change will have passed over them all, and obliterated them as effectually as if they had never existed.

The annals of the stage are full of the wrecks of once-prosperous schools and systems which, in their time, brought fame and profit to many players and managers, and seemed as firmly rooted as any other social institutions, but which have disappeared from the scene—some rapidly, some after a hard struggle, but all, so far as one can judge, without hope of revival. Where, for instance, is the old-fashioned farce—the farce of Liston, of Reeve, of Buckstone, of Keeley, of Harley, of Compton, of Wright? Respect for so faithful a servant of the public as Mr. Toole keeps some pale simulacrum of it fitfully on the provincial boards; but it is dead all the same—as dead as Julius Cæsar, as dead, for the matter of that, as pantomime itself. In the face of the fact that the Christmas pantomime is still the backbone of Drury Lane, that Mr. Oscar Barrett has established a successful opposition at the Lyceum, and that the prosperity of scores of country managers depends entirely on the success or failure of their pantomimes, this seems a bold saying. But the simple fact is that the pantomime of to-day is not only not pantomime at all, but has no connection whatever with it—even when, as is not always the case, a feeble and apologetic concession to old traditions is made by tacking a poor little harlequinade on to the main show. Probably now that Harry Payne is gone (the last of the genuine clowns, and one of the best of good fellows), the last link will be broken, and the harlequinade will be allowed to die out altogether.



It is not necessary to go back to the days of Rich if we desire to show how little claim the pantomime of to-day can make to be even a distant relation of the real thing. The limits of living memory—indeed, of the memory of men who have not yet reached old age—afford ample proof of the decadence and death of pantomime. I began my career as a playgoer—it was a matter of fifty years ago, though I don't believe it—at Drury Lane; during the time of Macready's management, I suppose it was. The bill of the play on my first night contained *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, with Macready, James Anderson, and Helen Faucit in the cast; and a pantomime, *Harlequin Duke Humphrey*. Theatrical entertainments began earlier and lasted longer in those days than they do now; but, even making allowance for that, the fact that the pantomime was then, and for many years afterwards, always preceded by a rather long play, shows that it was a much more modest kind of entertainment than it is now, and made no attempt to monopolise the whole evening. Indeed, it was a simple business enough, but it had a strong individuality, in that it was actually pantomime—a play, that is, carried on by gesture and without dialogue. The principal parts in the “opening”—some conventional little story of true love which did not run smooth—were usually played by the performers who afterwards represented Harlequin and Columbine, Clown and Pantaloon, and who wore the costumes proper to the harlequinade under the dresses of the opening story, the latter being whisked away from them in very artless fashion as they stood at the wings in the transformation scene. Not much was attempted in the way of display, a good deal of reliance being placed on mechanical tricks, the vogue of which had descended from the days of Rich; and it was not until Beverley's beautiful final scenes to the Vestris extravaganzas at the Lyceum—*King Charming*, *The Blue Bird*, *Once Upon a Time there were Two Kings*, and the rest—that managers entered into serious competition with one another in the matter of scenery. Extravagance in this very naturally led to extravagance in other kinds of display, and the early simplicity of pantomime had practically disappeared early in the 'fifties. For some time dumb show was adhered to, but by-and-bye the Clowns and Pantaloons were relegated entirely to the harlequinade, and their places in the opening were taken by the ordinary low comedians. As these gentlemen could not, in the course of nature, be restrained from speech, dialogue had to be written for them, and thus the “book of words” of the pantomime began, although the lovers were still pantomimists.

The first pantomime which I remember as throwing dumb show overboard altogether was a singular production at the Adelphi, in 1857 or thereabouts, which was provided with what was called a

“burlesque opening” by Mark Lemon, and in the harlequinade of which Madame Celeste appeared as a “Harlequin à la Watteau,” Miss Mary Keeley as Columbine, and Mr. Garden as Clown. After that the change was easy; managers followed each other in their customary sheep-like manner, and the reign of the princes and princesses of burlesque pantomime set in. By-and-bye came the introduction of “Sprites;” “Risley performers;” Harlequins; double sets of Clowns and Pantaloons, of Harlequins and Columbines; and a number of other innovations which appear to me to have had little but their novelty—when they were new—to recommend them.

But for a great many years a coherent story was told in the pantomime openings, and told with plenty of humour and fun too. I remember that admirable comedian, George Honey, in some capital pantomimes at the Princess’s in Charles Kean’s time—*Bluff King Hal*, *King Jamie or Harlequin Guy Fawkes*, and others—and the man who has seen much better comic acting than that of W. H. Payne and his son Fred in some of the many pantomimes with which their names are inseparably associated is a man to be envied. Especially do I recall them as the Idle and Industrious Apprentices in *Harlequin Hogarth*, at Drury Lane (in E. T. Smith’s time, I think); and, to come to a later date, in *The Forty Thieves*, at Covent Garden, under the management of the first Augustus Harris. The latter was one of the very best pantomimes I ever saw. Then came the delightful and never-to-be-forgotten Vokes family—the nimble and humorous Fred, the charming Victoria (an excellent actress of serious melodrama too), and the irresistible Rosina. Under all these the form of entertainment which had taken the place of the even then dead and gone pantomime flourished exceedingly, and was bright, and lively, and amusing, as well as sufficiently showy and splendid.

And then came the deluge. The floodgates of the music halls were opened, and all that was agreeable about the “grand comic Christmas pantomime” was promptly and effectually drowned out. Then followed a period, out of which we have not yet fully emerged, of hopeless, inane, and offensive vulgarity all over the country—a vulgarity which, it is not at all pleasant to think, has been of a most popular kind, and highly remunerative to performers and managers alike. It is odd enough to recall the fact that, in the course of the war between the patent and minor theatres, serious melodrama in dumb show was for a considerable length of time a highly-popular form of theatrical entertainment. The only departure from strict pantomime that was permitted in those curious plays

was when something had to be explained which it was absolutely beyond the power of dumb show to express, when the performer would resort to the expedient of unrolling a scroll on which appeared the necessary explanation, and exhibiting it to the audience. I have read several of the books of these highly romantic dramas—*Rinaldo Rinaldini* may be given as a sample of their titles—and queer enough reading is a “script” which consists entirely of stage directions.

The old English pantomime is dead; but that the art of pantomimic acting is not yet lost to the world was shown by Mdlle. Jane May and her clever company in *L'Enfant Prodigue*, and is continually demonstrated by the skilful Martinetti troupe. It is a pity that the knowledge of it cannot be more extended among our modern actors and actresses, so few of whom understand anything about the effectiveness of appropriate and expressive gesture. A few lessons in the business of Harlequin would teach many a young man, for instance, the simple lesson that arms may be moved with advantage from the shoulder as well as from the elbow; and so we should get rid of one of the awkwardest, ugliest, and commonest of modern stage tricks. And there would be nothing derogatory to anyone's dignity in the study. Many of our most distinguished actors have graduated in pantomime—Wilson Barrett, for example, as Harlequin; and Henry Irving, as Policeman.

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## THE “BOOK” OF THE PANTOMIME.

BY T. EDGAR PEMBERTON.

I WONDER whether the pantomimes I saw in the days of my boyhood were really as beautiful and laughter-moving as sweet memory tells me? Possibly not. And yet I hope always to cherish the recollection of a stage on which the prototypes of the fairies that Grimm and Gammer Grethel and Hans Christian Andersen had taught me to believe in gaily and realistically tripped; of one of the dear old familiar nursery stories unfolded through a series of scenes of sufficiently sustained sentiment and well restrained fun; of convincing demons playing havoc with the fortunes of an ideal prince and a perfect princess, and of a transformation scene in which, at the wave of the queen fairy's wand, vanquished vice became purloining clown and buffeted pantaloons, and victorious virtue blossomed into pirouetting columbine and bespangled harlequin. I daresay if one of these entertainments were put before me now I should, comparing it with the gorgeous scenery, magnificent dresses, and marvellous stage effects of to-day, find the whole



thing meagre and disappointing; but while I live I mean to rejoice in the belief that in the days of long ago I saw more than one ideal Christmas pantomime.

Ideals are pleasant things to cherish. To attempt their realisation is, as I shall now faithfully record, unwise. A good many years have elapsed since an incautious manager asked me to write a pantomime. At first I hesitated; but upon being pressed, and fondly hoping to revive for the children of those days—they must be grown up now—the happydream of my own childhood, I said that I would do my best, provided that the pantomime might be a very simple one—a pantomime in which one of the dear old nursery legends should be so closely followed that the merest “toddlers” might be able to appreciate and understand it. My manager, believing, as he told me, that a time had come when a children’s pantomime written on the old lines would be popular, accepted my conditions, and on my stipulation that there should be an abundance of fairies, said, “Certainly, dear boy—and your fairies” (I was writing for a provincial theatre) “shall be picked London ladies.” Thus stimulated and encouraged, I set to work. At that moment I believed myself to be a man with a mission—that mission being to produce a perfect pantomime in which humour pleasantly combining with fancy would form a Christmas entertainment in which young and old would alike revel.

Determined to go to the very root of things, I took some delightful dips into Mr. J. Thackray Bunce’s charming volume, *Fairy Tales: Their Origin and Meaning*, in which he says: “We are going into Fairy Land for a little while, to see what we can find there to amuse and interest us this Christmas time. Does anybody know the way? There are no maps or guide books, and the places we meet with in our workaday world do not seem like the homes of the fairies. Yet we have only to put on our wishing caps, and we can get into Fairy Land in a moment. The house walls fade away, the winter sky brightens the sun shines out, the weather grows warm and pleasant, flowers spring up, great trees cast a friendly shade, streams murmur cheerfully over their pebbly beds, jewelled fruits are to be had for the trouble of gathering them; invisible hands set out well-covered dinner tables, brilliant forms flit in and out across our path, and we all at once find ourselves in the company of dear old friends whom we have known and loved ever since we knew anything. There is Fortunatus with his magic purse, and the square of carpet that carries him anywhere; and Aladdin with his wonderful Lamp; and Sindbad with the diamonds he has picked up in the Valley of Serpents; and the Invisible Prince who uses the fairy cat to get his dinner for him; and the Sleeping



Beauty in the wood, just awakened by the young Prince after her long sleep of a hundred years; and Puss in Boots curling his whiskers after having eaten up the ogre who foolishly changed himself into a mouse; and Beauty and the Beast; and the Blue Bird; and Little Red Riding Hood; and Jack the Giant Killer; and Jack and the Beanstalk; and the Yellow Dwarf; and Cinderella and her Fairy Godmother; and great numbers besides of whom we haven't time to say anything now."

It was this sort of thing that I desired to put upon the stage. And now we will see how I did it. It matters little which of the old nursery legends I was called upon to deal with; it was, indeed, and as often occurs in pantomime, a medley of such legends. From what I then believed to be (my faith in myself has been sorely shaken since) a fanciful point of view, I took honest pains with my "book," and when it was completed, I, with a great feeling of self-confidence, resolved to try its effect on an audience of my own little sons and daughters. At the conclusion of my reading—which had been listened to with unbroken silence—one of my little listeners said: "Father, we may choose this Christmas between going to the circus or the pantomime, mayn't we?" And when I, deeply hurt that no enthusiasm for my reading was shown, said "Yes," there came a unanimous chorus of "Oh please let us go to the circus!" In the way of criticism, this was the greatest crusher I have ever had. My next task was to read the work to my manager, who, having listened to it without interruption, delivered himself of the remarkable words: "I hope it is comic." "*Hope* it is comic?" I cried. "Why you have just heard me read it! *Isn't* it comic?" "I hope so," gloomily replied the manager. At rehearsals, moreover, this gentleman amazed me by the slight value that he seemed to put on my great effort to write a superlatively good pantomime. Of course it was too long. There probably never was a play written yet, from *Hamlet* down to—well, down to, let us say, my poor pantomime, that was not too long. I knew that, and was prepared for "cuts;" but I did feel hurt when the manager said: "Now, then, we've got to get a good half-hour out of it. Cut from page — to page —." "Why, that's the very cream of my story!" I gasped. "Confound it all, sir! we must cut *something*!" said the manager; and so my cream was skimmed. In this production, a charming young actress, who played the boy-prince, took, to my intense delight, infinite pains with the part that I had written for her, playing it with the grace and intelligence of a true artist. Unluckily she did not achieve her wonted success, and, to my mortification, her indignant father (he was anything but charming, but I think he knew his business) told me that "I had 'corpsed'

the girl's chances with my 'idiotic cackle!' " My poor Prince Filagree! I fondly hoped to win you fame and fortune,—and I imperilled your next year's engagement! Luckily a taking comic song (of which I was *not* the writer) subsequently made all things right for her.

Now, I have never been quite able to decide whether the time was not ripe for a children's pantomime, or whether my pantomime was not ripe enough for the children, and, like other unripe things, disagreed with them. However that may be, I fear that the undertaking brought little or no grist to the managerial mill. My next manager did, from his point of view, a judicious thing. He allowed my fairy fancies to have full swing, but he provided me with a collaborator just for the sake, as he put it, of dropping in some "locals." At the time this sounded all right; but dire was my wrath when my meant-to-be tender little love scenes, and supposed-to-be elfin episodes, were interlarded with allusions to semi-transparent soaps, and wholly transparent advertisements for the tradesmen of the town in which the piece was produced. The lot of the pantomime writer is, indeed, in many instances, and for many reasons, an unhappy one, and perhaps his greatest comfort lies in the fact that after two or three performances very little of his libretto is spoken. "Well, you can always refer your public to your printed book," said a sympathising friend to whom I mentioned these and other troubles. Can you! In too many cases the pantomime book is printed by contract—so many advertisements, and so many lines of the luckless author's "cackle." It would be a sorry thing for some pantomime writers if their efforts were to be gauged by such amount of their endeavours as economy allows to appear in print.

Well, if I did not succeed in regenerating modern pantomime, my experience taught me useful lessons. I learnt how hard actors and actresses work to entertain the Christmas holiday folk; how earnestly their efforts are seconded by the crowds that do duty in subordinate parts; and how much managers risk in the resplendent and costly spectacles that are expected on the stage of to-day. As we all know, the drama's laws are made by its patrons, and managers have only to study the public taste, for, as Garrick said—

"Although we actors one and all agree  
Boldly to struggle for our vanity,  
If want comes in, importance must retreat,  
Our first great ruling passion is—to eat."

Happily, as far as Christmas pantomime is concerned, signs are not wanting that the public taste is undergoing a change, and

that the mere "variety show" that for too many years has been in vogue will soon be a thing of the past. By his beautiful and in every sense refined productions, Mr. Oscar Barrett has conclusively proved, not only in London but in the provinces, that the public will welcome a good thing when it is to be had. His has been the task to weld the perfection of the arts of the painter, the costumier, the musician, and the rhymster into one artistic whole, and to demonstrate that such an entertainment, avowedly designed for children, is as acceptable to the old as to the young.

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### THE TRUE POWER OF CRITICISM.

BY S. J. ADAIR FITZ-GERALD.

**D**RAMATIC criticism to be serviceable must be sincere. The flippant phrasing of sententious similes for the mere sake of gaining a passing effect is not criticism, though many casual scribes seem to think it is. The temptation to be smart at the expense of fact and the author's feelings is too great for some writers to resist, while the cruelty of their oftentimes premature-censure, when indulging in this prevalent pastime, never once occurs to them—except, maybe, to cause them joy. Critics, unfortunately, are the only infallible men, and they deal out death and damnation as a tinker deals out oaths. Candour is their boast; but to be candid is not to be clever nor convincing. A cabman is invariably candid, but he is never convincing. Besides, there are several sorts of candour—the truthful, the half-truthful, and the mendacious. The rare first and last, as applied to the criticisms of the professional critic, are easily met, and in both instances, if necessary, rebutted; but the half-truth! There comes the rub. And so much of our latter-day criticism consists of half-truths or disguised and qualified statements. Some men are gifted with the unhappy faculty of writing a vast quantity of words without saying anything definite. You can scarcely tell whether the play they criticise be good, bad, or indifferent; and though this is the kind of notice that gladdens the managerial heart—it is so quotable, and puzzling to the public—to the right-thinking lover of the drama it is saddening and painful. But the general aim of the critic seems to be to condemn at all hazards, especially if the work under review be that of a beginner, or an ambitious man anxious to learn and to achieve success. This is the time when the critic—a large majority of him, at any rate—feels in his glory, and he slings on his inkpot ready for the fray, particularly if he be a dramatist, heard or unheard, himself. If the young writer, who may have been years trying to get his chance, shows the least sign of



weakness of plot, dialogue, or construction, instead of having his faults pointed out to him in a kindly way and encouraged to try again, he is gibbeted and reviled, and the critic is filled with amazement at the novice's temerity. Right and left his errors, his follies, his mistakes are scathingly exposed, and more often than not he is ridiculed and abused for attempting to do his best—his very best, for his own sake and the sake of his art. Apparently he has no right to try to do his best. He has no right to begin to climb at all. If he fail, it is madness; if he succeed, it is a crime—at least, in the theatrical world. Yet no man wilfully plays for a fall. And in any case the critic is amazed—amazed at his audacity, at his impudence for daring to make a name and a reputation for himself. Now it seems to me that a critic has no right to be amazed at anything. His function is to give a just and true report of what he has seen and heard exactly as it strikes him, not as he thinks it *might* strike him, or anyone else. If a man's opinion is not individual, then his individual opinion is worth nothing, and he becomes a mere vermicular appendage to the microcosm of dilettantism.

There is far too much fault-finding—too much abuse and too little praise—in the criticism of the age. Most critics are men of course; but it is not every critic who has sufficient confidence to be manly in the pursuit of his avocation. It is so easy to be captious, so hard apparently to distinguish between severity and justness. If criticism is to be of any advantage, it must be just. While condemning the faults, maybe the follies of a writer in his work, a wise discretion should prompt a critic to praise where the good qualities make themselves evident; and it must indeed be a bad play that has not some elements of excellence. A little praise is such an encouraging thing. And the artistic temperament needs praise. Let us have praise, praise, and yet again praise, where it is deserved. Wholesale slashing does harm all round, and rarely brings value to anyone in its train. The power of criticism is to awaken strength, to suggest improvement, to give impetus to the aspiring and the struggling dramatist and librettist, not to crush and pulverise him and his efforts eternally. Not that the hardest criticism ever kills the determined and the talented author, but it numbs him and jaundices his nature, and blunts his finer sense of the honesty of things and men. And honesty is what is wanted so badly. Because one part of a piece is reprehensible we should not be blinded to the importance, the superiority, the super-eminence perhaps, of the rest, or a portion of the rest of the play. In these days, when there is so much log-rolling among critical friends, surely it is not too much to ask that fair judgment may



be accorded to the uninitiated and the stranger without the pale.

Criticism loses all its value if it be in any way biassed either one way or the other. Quite recently a writer on a morning journal, in reviewing a new musical piece, made a most egregious blunder in "quoting" a part of a song that was never sung nor intended to be sung. And nearly every weekly paper in London fell into the trap thus accidentally laid, and made use, from this daily paper of course, of the self-same unsaid, unsung, unuttered quatrain, and quoted it against the author. Now, is that, was that true independent criticism, or spite, or indifference, or weakness? Methinks it savours of all four qualities. How can one trust to criticisms of this unreliable and cruel nature? Such errors ought not to be, and until criticism can be untrammelled and entirely independent—each critic giving his own absolute accurate account of what has transpired from his own personal knowledge—criticism can carry no weight. To be accurate is above all things the critic's duty. Nothing should come to him second hand, nor should he tolerate anything in his reviews that are not his own unconstrained conclusions. The true power of criticism lies in its definite power to be true.

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## "THE COMEDY OF ERRORS" AT GRAY'S INN.

BY ARTHUR à BECKETT,

Master of the Revels of Gray's Inn, 1887.

EARLY in 1887 I was seated in the library at Gray's Inn, glancing through the pages of Mr. Douthwaite's excellent work upon the "History and Associations" of the Hon. Society of which he is the erudite and respected librarian. I got through the chapter upon "Maskes and Revels," when it suddenly occurred to me—my friend Mr. F. C. Burnand would have called it "A Happy Thought"—to address my Masters of the Bench and propose to them that we should celebrate Her Majesty's Jubilee according to precedent. In the days of old the subjects of "The Prince of Purpoole" were wont to entertain the sovereigns of England either at home on the southern side of Holborn, or abroad in the palace of Whitehall. Just at the moment *The Comedy of Errors* was being played at the Strand Theatre, under the management of Mr. J. S. Clarke, and with the general assistance of the late Hon. Lewis Wingfield. According to Mr. Douthwaite, *The Comedy of Errors* had been performed in the hall of Gray's Inn during the lifetime of its author. Why not revive the piece? It was quite true that the

original performance had only been put up as a "stop gap." A maske that the Gray's Inn men had prepared for the edification of the "Templarians" had come to grief. Thanks to the overcrowding of the Hall, there had not been sufficient room for either the audience or those scenic accessories without which a maske was incomplete. So the Master of the Revels of the period, at his wits'-end for a "show," had applied to the "strolling players," and a representation of *The Comedy of Errors* was the result. I reminded my revered Masters of the Bench of all this, and suggested that we, after a lapse of nearly three centuries, might return to our ancient amusements, and "do" the play ourselves. I despatched my letter, and waited with some impatience for the answer. The reply came in due course. The deputy treasurer, the late Master Francis—he was *locum tenens* for the Duke of Connaught, his nominal chief—thought well of the notion but suggested an amendment. "Why," asked my learned friend, "should we do a play, when we might attempt a maske?" I adopted the proposal with enthusiasm. I selected *The Maske of Flowers*, and as "Master of the Revels" produced that charming extravaganza to (I trust) the satisfaction of everyone. My friends, the late John O'Connor and Lewis Wingfield (aforesaid) gave me every assistance, and our company was composed of barristers and "their sisters, their cousins, and their aunts." We reproduced the old set pieces and the old dances and the old music. I edited the book, and edited it considerably, because King James the First, before whom the maske was originally played, had a taste that would scarcely have found sympathetic treatment at the hands of the present Examiner of Plays. When our work came to be criticised, I was rather amused at one of our leading literary authorities calling attention to the quaint phrases "redolent of the early Stuarts" which spoke of "Kowasha's Valiant crewe." As a matter of fact (I do not mind making the admission "after many years") the "quaint phrase" in question was of my own invention. I cut and contrived the libretto until it assumed proportions "decent" in both length and morality. Well, *The Maske of Flowers* passed off, to be revived in 1891 at the Inner Temple Hall, when I once again was stage manager. But on this last occasion, owing to the necessities of the situation, I was obliged to be licensed, and accordingly became "sole and responsible manager" of the "Inner Temple Hall Theatre" (for one occasion only), with a Lord Chancellor for one of my sureties, and his private secretary and nephew (Mr. Frank Hardinge Giffard, now secretary to the Commissioners in Lunacy) as the other. For the moment *The Comedy of Errors* was shelved. However, it was only to remain in abeyance for years—not for ever. Some

months ago I learned that General Power, barrister-at-law and treasurer of Gray's Inn, had regarded with favourable eyes the proposal of the "Elizabethan Stage Society" to revive the venerable play in the Hall of Gray's Inn. As "Master of the Revels" in 1887 (I fancy, as I have not been deposed, I may still claim the title in 1895), I offered a rather faint-hearted protest. I suggested that as members of the Four Hostelries, eight years ago, had been equal to the task of producing *The Maske of Flowers* they might attempt the fresh labour of reviving *The Comedy of Errors*. But I was over-ruled, and the result of the over-ruling was the very excellent performances of the 6th, 7th, and 9th of December, 1895, "under the direction of Mr. William Poel." Now, I am afraid that all men are subject at times to professional jealousy, and I feel that even "Masters of the Revels" are not exempt from that failing. Speaking for myself, I must confess that I should have been better pleased if the Bar had undertaken the task so satisfactorily executed by those who used in Shakspeare's time to be described as "strolling players;" but, having made this admission, I have nothing further to urge in condemnation. Nay, I must admit, for conscience sake, that the "Elizabethan Stage Society" had a precedent that shielded them from the charge of presumption. I have already referred to the original production of *The Comedy of Errors* in the Hall of Gray's Inn. It will be seen that the Players, and not the Bar, had performed in 1594. What was done three centuries ago was merely repeated in 1895. So my perfunctory remonstrance might, with every excuse, be accepted as "captious criticism" by everyone save (perhaps) a "Master of the Revels," and having made my "Apologia" I drop the character of the official to adopt the far pleasanter rôle of interested spectator.

Thanks to the courtesy of the treasurer and Masters of the Bench, I was present at the last representation. A glance at the play bill told me that there was to be "no division into acts." Said this interesting document in a footnote, "The plays of Shakspeare that were published in his lifetime, and which are known as the quartos, are not divided into scenes and acts, and it is possible that in Shakspeare's time no pause was made in the acting. In the present representation there will be no interval in the course of the play." And this programme was carried out, with the result that the comedy (with some not very very important "cuts") was run through in one hour and ten minutes! From first to last the performance was deeply interesting. The lower portion of the Old Hall was reserved for the players. There were three entrances. Two of them were obtained from the doors of the old screen dividing the dining apartment from the



passage, sacred in term time to the gowns of the Utter barristers and ambitious students. The third entrance was secured by using a door leading to the cellars of the Hon. Society. The audience occupied the space given over at banqueting hours to the Benchers, the barristers, and the tables devoted to the senior students. To reach this third entrance the actors and actresses had to thread their way along a gangway reserved for them amongst the spectators. The portal was guarded by two stalwart grenadiers, wearing for the nonce the garb of Beefeaters of the time of James the First. In these picturesque uniforms (designed by Sir James Linton, the President of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours), I recognised some that had been worn at a ball given in Piccadilly when I produced *The Maske of Flowers*. I borrowed these dresses, which had on their breasts "R.I." (Royal Institute), which by transposition served admirably as the initials of "Jacobus Rex." When all was ready, some official gave the thump on the table, that in term time calls Benchers, barristers, and students to attention, before the Preacher or his deputy, the Reader, says "Grace." Then there was the roll of a drum—and attendants and Beefeaters bearing torches marched in and took up their places at the limits of the Hall reserved for the action of the piece, leaving clear the entrances, and, of course, the part usually occupied by footlights. Then came a flourish of trumpets, heard (like the drum) "without," and the Duke entered, preceded by halberdiers and a master of the ceremonies. Then the comedy was played from beginning to ending without a pause. It was perfectly easy to understand the story, and it was not difficult to divide the play into scenes and acts for oneself. For a moment, at the end of an act, the space reserved for the acting was left unoccupied. But only for a moment. One set of players down, or rather out, another was ready to come on, or rather in. Now and again the Music Gallery was utilised for the entrance of characters whose appearance was rendered more reasonable by the suggestion of distance. Thus the Abbess recognised her husband from the coign of vantage to which I have referred, and no doubt, had *Romeo and Juliet* been the piece of the evening, the lady would have listened to the vows of her lover from the same elevated position. The dresses were interesting as of the period. Of course there was no attempt to reproduce the costumes of Ephesus and Syracuse, but we saw before us the everyday wear of the days of Shakspeare. The ladies in the cast distinguished themselves, but were not quite in line with the remainder of the dramatis personæ. To be "true to nature," Adriana Luciana and the others should have been boys. However, the audience found no



fault with a change of sex that was scarcely sanctioned by tradition. But the feature of the performance was the Hall itself. A man with very little poetry in his composition could easily conjure up a scene of the past. The dining-room of Gray's Inn, with its stained glass windows, its portraits of the Stuart Sovereigns and the Tudor Queen; and its old oak screen, said to have been constructed out of some of the veritable wood of the Spanish Armada, was there as it had been three centuries ago. The audience of 1594 was no doubt less decorous than the spectators of 1895. On Monday, December 9th, the Benchers, barristers, and students (many of them accompanied by the ladies of their families) were genial but sedate. The applause, when it came, was hearty enough; but for quarters of an hour at a time nothing was heard but the language of Shakspeare. According to an old chronicler, in 1594 "the Templarians left the Hall discontented and displeased. After their departure the throngs and tumults did somewhat cease, although so much of them continued, as was able to disorder and confound any good Inventions whatsoever. In regard whereof it was thought good not to offer anything of Account, saving Dancing and Reveling with Gentlewomen; and after such Sports a 'Comedy of Errors' (like to 'Plautus his the Menechmus') was played by the Players; so that night was begun and continued to the end, in nothing but Confusion and Errors; whereupon it was ever afterwards called 'The Night of Errors.'" And thus we learn what was one contemporary criticism of Shakspeare's farce. "It was thought good not to offer anything of Account!" Well, the spectators of the other evening had a greater appreciation of the poet's writing. The courteous Benchers, the polite barristers, the amiable students were on their best behaviour. And if there was any mistake about the performance it was that at which I have hinted. "What Gray's Inn once has done Gray's Inn can do again!"

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## Portraits.

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MR. AND MRS. H. V. ESMOND.

MR. ESMOND must be, by this time, a little tired of seeing himself referred to as "promising." And yet, though we can sympathise with him, we cannot but add our voice to the general, and speak of him as a clever young playwright and actor, whose work, so far, has been sufficiently striking to make us think that in the future, near or far, he may achieve something to fulfil the high expectations of his talents formed by those who have watched his career with sympathetic interest. In his unfortunate *Bogey*, as in *The Divided Way*, there was much of good, as all competent to judge were quick to recognise. The faults were mainly those of a new writer, whose ambition at present outweighs his experience and his powers. But ambition is nothing to be ashamed of, especially when it leads a young author to put his best work into his plays, and to forsake the path of convention and hackneyed stage-device for the strait and narrow way of originality, of conscientious effort to record personal observations, and to give his own intuitions of life and character. Mr. Esmond has been before the public since 1886. He first attracted notice in London by his playing in *The Middleman*, in which piece Miss Eva Moore, the winsome and clever young actress whom he married in 1891, also made one of her earliest appearances on the stage. An engagement with Mr. Edward Terry led to his making a decided hit in the part of the graceless young Bompas in *The Times*, while his playing as Cayley Drummle in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*—as Eddie in *The Masqueraders*, and as the young artist in *The Triumph of the Philistines* still further increased his reputation as an actor of quite exceptional gifts and versatility. His engagement to play Little Billee, a part for which he possesses decided qualifications, has strengthened the cast of *Trilby*, though it hardly affords him so great a scope for his abilities as the characters just mentioned. Miss Eva Moore has played numerous parts during her eight years' experience, and in each has won golden opinions for bright comedy and charm of style. That she can sing as well as act those who saw her in *The Mountebanks* and in *Little Christopher Columbus* will remember; and her performance in *Bogey* showed that she can touch an audience by tenderness and gentle pathos as well as delight them by her vivacity and humour.

"THE THEATRE," JANUARY, 1896.



*Photographed by Alfred Ellis, 20, Upper Baker St., N.W.*

*Copyright.*

MR. & MRS. H. V. ESMOND.

(MISS EVA MOORE.)





## Feuilleton.

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MARIANNE :

AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY LEGEND.

BY MONTAGU HAWKINS.

**P**ROSPER D'ENNERY was a promising young actor. He had played the Young Brahmin in *The Widow of Malabar* in a Bordeaux company with great credit, the fame of his performance having even reached the Parisian Boulevards. But, having proved himself a better actor than his comrades, he was made an object of all the petty slights and insults which only unworthy jealousy can plan. He felt himself sufficiently strong to part from them, and a sunny afternoon sees him on the top of a coach bound for Toulouse, where it seemed likely that he would speedily be able to obtain another engagement.

He was aroused from a reverie by the sound of horses galloping quickly towards them. When their riders caught sight of the coach they shouted :

“Robbers! Robbers! Be prepared! Robbers!” as they swiftly passed. Those on the coach could not see anyone ahead who appeared to be following the fugitive horsemen, but had little time to think more of it, for the coach-horses, startled by the occurrence, had taken fright, and were fast becoming unmanageable. After vainly contending with the horses for a few moments, the driver, by some mischance, dropped the reins. Freed from all control, the horses now drew the coach along at a frightful rate.

D'Ennery, grasping the situation in a moment, clambered on to the box, and, by reaching very far forward, was just able to catch the reins. He then drew in quickly—so quickly, indeed, that the coach completely overturned, hurling the outside passengers into a muddy stream that ran alongside the road. But D'Ennery saw the result of his rashness in time to save at least one of the passengers. Leaping backwards, he stretched out his arm, and was just able to save a young girl from a fractured skull, though at the cost of a broken limb to himself.

For six long weeks D'Ennery did not rise from his bed. Fever had supervened, and M. Crussol, the girl's father, who had received the young man into his house at Toulouse, willingly

allowed his lovely daughter to nurse her deliverer back to life. Can it be wondered, therefore, if Prosper D'Ennery, in the first gleams of returning consciousness, learned to love the tender, pitying face always bent so near his own? Or that she, when she perceived his feeling, suffered him to see that his love was returned?

But there was a shadow over them. Pierre Marmont, the apprentice of M. Crussol, was a youth of notoriously evil repute in Toulouse. His pretensions to the hand of Marianne, though opposed by Madame Crussol, were favoured by the girl's father, who hoped that Pierre would ultimately settle down, and, by attention to business, prove himself worthy to be his son-in-law and heir.

On the first day that Prosper was able to make his appearance at his host's dinner-table, resolved to acquaint M. Crussol with his affection for Marianne, he was the witness of a painful domestic incident. Madame Crussol, who never lost occasion to decry Pierre to her husband, rejoiced in the possession of a new bit of scandal regarding the apprentice, and Marianne not being present, she duly regaled her spouse with her own version of it.

"What do you think?" she cried, coming suddenly into the room where her husband and Prosper were seated. "Your irreproachable Pierre has to my certain knowledge been in nightly attendance upon Mlle. Mignot, the actress."

"Sancta Maria! This is past belief!"

"True, I assure you—the town has no other topic."

"Then his indentures must be cancelled! I could not allow the associate of play-actors to remain for a moment under my roof. If our holy father were to hear that we knowingly harboured such a one, he would anathematise us. For has he not told us that an actor is a spiritual leper? Yes, and if Pierre Marmont has consorted with them he is tainted and can no longer stay with us. This, then, is the meaning of the late hours he has been keeping. Where is he? I must find him and must confront him with this accusation."

"He is here," said a voice at the door, "and I am not ashamed to own that what you have heard is partially true."

"Then leave my house. Your indentures are cancelled, and the forfeit shall be sent after you."

D'Ennery felicitated himself upon not having yet acquainted the merchant and his family with his name. He was not surprised at the vindictive hatred shown by the priest-ridden merchant towards the members of his profession and their associates, for at this period the strife between church and stage was at its height. He therefore resolved to be known by his baptismal name of Dussieux—pardonable equivocation, surely, for a man so placed.

"I have saved," he said to Crussol and his wife, "a little money, and should like to settle down in Toulouse if you will grant me a great boon."

"And that is——?" asked Madame Crussol, encouragingly.

"There are few things in our power that either my good wife or myself would hesitate to do for you, Prosper, who have preserved for us our dearest treasure," said the woollen-draper.

"Your kind words make the task of asking more difficult. I would ask for the hand of your only child," said Dussieux, speaking diffidently, as he felt the magnitude of his request.

M. Crussol did not immediately reply.

"If you have gained Marianne's love," said the wife, "my husband, I am sure, will not withhold his consent."

"If, sir, you will become my apprentice in the place of Pierre, and will promise to settle here during our lifetime, you may marry my daughter in, say, six months from now."

"I can never be too grateful for your kindness," said the young man.

The day fixed for the union of Prosper Dussieux with Marianne at length arrived. The betrothed lovers were at the altar; the parents of the bride looked lovingly upon their child, and inwardly prayed for her happiness. The priest was performing the ceremony, and was on the point of uttering that solemn interrogation the answering of which will bind the pair together. Suddenly a man, forcing his way through the group of spectators, advanced to the balustrade in front of the altar. It was Pierre Marmont. The priest, indignant at the interruption, was about to order the intruder to stand aside, when Pierre, addressing the bridegroom, said, "Your name is not Prosper Dussieux, but Prosper D'Ennery!"

"My name is Prosper Dussieux. By that name was I baptised, and by that name will I take my marriage vows," in a tone of repressed excitement.

Pierre handed the priest an open billet. He took it, and as he read what was written his brow lowered and his colour rose. When he had finished, he turned to Dussieux, and said in a loud voice, "Swear, I command you, before God and His minister that your name is not D'Ennery."

"My name, I repeat, is Prosper Dussieux, and I swear before God and His minister to—to be faithful to Marianne, and to devote my whole life to her happiness."

"The happiness of a Christian woman cannot be entrusted to you," rejoined the priest. "See, imprudent parents!" he continued, handing the billet to M. Crussol. "Would you give your daughter to a play-actor?"



“A play-actor!”

The word is indignantly repeated by everyone in the church.

“Yes, my brethren, an actor! A child of perdition, on whose head I was about to pronounce a benediction, but on whom I now invoke an anathema. Quit the church! Begone this instant.”

“Make way for him,” he added, addressing the people. “No longer let him sully this sacred place with his presence!”

Dussieux had not heard the command. He had fallen senseless to the ground. Some men among the crowd raised him up and conveyed him to a neighbouring house, in which actors were in the habit of lodging. Marianne exhibited more fortitude. She did not faint—no word escaped her lips—no tear fell from her eye. Casting a look of unutterable scorn upon Pierre Marmont, who was advancing to offer her his arm, she turned her back upon him, and assisted her father, whom the shock of the catastrophe had rendered almost entirely helpless, down the aisle of the church. On their way home they passed the house in which Dussieux was lying, but Marianne steadily averted her eyes from the windows, allowing no trace of regret to show itself on her pale, calm face.

Dussieux received all possible attentions from his comrades. With returning consciousness there came the desire to put an end to his existence. But upon being made acquainted with the indifference shown by the woman he already regarded as his wife, he made an effort to summon resolution to bear his misfortune. Something like a feeling of vengeance even arose in his mind, and he would live were it only to gratify that feeling. He took the ring that was to have united him to Marianne from his pocket, dashed it to the ground, and stamped upon it in frenzy. He then picked it up, and, looking at it, perceived that its shape and form remained unimpaired by his rough usage. He raised it to his lips and kissed it, all trace of anger having left his face.

His returning faith in Marianne’s love was justified. Late that night she made her way to the house in which Dussieux was staying. Upon her arm was a small basket of provisions. She had spent that evening in preparing them.

The next morning they were found locked in each other’s embrace—dead. Marianne’s face resembled that of a placid sleeper dreaming pleasant dreams. Her left hand lay carelessly upon the coverlet of the bed. And the third finger bore the sacred pledge of her love and purity—her lover’s ring.



## At the Play.

### IN LONDON.

A REACTION, more severe than is usual even at this time of the year, has set in, the consequence being the utter collapse of at least half-a-dozen important plays at as many leading West-end theatres, where certainly any immediate change of programme for some time to come was the last thing to be expected. The Adelphi, St. James's, Court, Shaftesbury, Duke of York's, Comedy, and Vaudeville have, however, been compelled to bow before the force of circumstances, and to hasten forward their preparations for the production of new plays.

### THE DIVIDED WAY.

An Original Play, in Three Acts, by H. V. Esmond. Produced at the St. James's Theatre  
November 23.

General Humeden	Mr. W. H. VERNON.	Mr. Swendal .. ..	Mr. E. M. ROBSON.
Gaunt Humeden ..	Mr. GEORGE ALEXANDER.	Kelly .. .. .	Mr. FRANK DYALL.
Jack Humeden ..	Mr. ALLAN AYNESWORTH.	Phyllis Humeden ..	Miss VIOLET LYSER.
Jay Grist .. ..	Mr. HERBERT WARING.	Mrs. Kelly .. ..	Miss MOUILLOT.
Dr. Macgrath ..	Mr. H. H. VINCENT.	Lois .. .. .	Miss EVELYN MILLARD.

Although Mr. H. V. Esmond's recently produced play, *Bogey*, failed to capture the public fancy, it showed on the part of the author so much real ability and power that the announcement of a new piece from his pen could hardly fail to awaken curiosity. *The Divided Way* marks another step in the upward career of the young dramatist. It is not by any means a work either faultless in execution or wholly convincing in treatment. But, at least, it stamps the author as an earnest, thoughtful, and discerning student of life, or rather of certain phases of life as they exist in the present age. If we are unable to express any admiration for—if, indeed, we are rather disposed to protest against—the writer's choice of subject, the fact need not blind us to the exceedingly forcible and clever manner in which he has handled it. *The Divided Way* is a study in passion—unreasoning, headstrong, overwhelming passion, that knows neither shame nor remorse, and for which, if it remain unsatisfied, there can be but one end—death. The subject is hardly to be called a pleasant one, and it is not surprising, accordingly, that Mr. Esmond's play, ingenious and capable as it is, has only held

the boards for three weeks, thus affording additional proof that a story in which all is shadow, unrelieved by scarcely one passing ray of light, must necessarily fail to attract the public for any length of time.

The sombre character of Mr. Esmond's play will at once be understood from the merest sketch of the plot. In the belief that her real, although undeclared, lover, Gaunt Humeden, has died abroad, Lois, the heroine, becomes the wife of his step-brother, Jack. Shortly afterwards, Gaunt, having, to the surprise of everyone, escaped from imprisonment in Africa, returns home to settle down in his father's house, in company with Jack and Lois. For an entire twelvemonth the volcano is allowed to smoulder. But the unexpected appearance of Jay Grist, Gaunt's friend and travelling companion, serves to stir it into activity. Unaware of the circumstances, Grist confesses to Lois that, throughout all the weary journeyings to and fro in Africa, Gaunt never ceased to harp upon the story of his love for her. The admission stirs Lois to the depths of her being. Urged on by consuming passion, she does not hesitate to sacrifice husband, home, even her own honour in her insensate endeavour to bring Gaunt to her feet. But the latter, while confessing his love, declines to play the part of traitor to his brother, and after a scene of extraordinary power, Lois at length decides to put a term to her sufferings by swallowing the poison which she had at first refused from his hand. So the play ends in gloom and misery, thus adding one more to the long list of pessimistic dramas of which our stage has had only too many examples of late. Yet its performance leaves a very real and deep impression that in Mr. Esmond we have a writer who may certainly be relied upon to achieve distinction of no mean order in the dramatic world. His power of character-drawing is already considerable, and he possesses a Dickens-like faculty of bringing into immediate evidence the salient features of each of his personages by some quaint stroke or happy touch. In the handling of his theme, as in the conduct of his story, one can detect at present a little uncertainty; the author seems to know what he wants, but not always how best to render it clear to his listeners. These, however, are minor blemishes, which hardly call for notice in face of the genuine ability and great intellectual insight to be found in his work. As Gaunt Humeden, Mr. George Alexander created a profound impression by his masterly exposition of a nature torn by the most violent and diverse emotions. Miss Evelyn Millard's performance of Lois again rendered manifest the fact that she is absolute mistress of the mechanism of her art, although, unfortunately, the inspiration and the magnetic force

which serve to make a great actress are only too plainly wanting. Mr. Allan Aynesworth gave an admirable portrait of the easy-going Jack Humeden, while service of the most valuable kind was rendered by Mr. W. H. Vernon, Mr. H. H. Vincent, and Mr. Herbert Waring in characters hardly less important. Miss Violet Lyster still lacks experience, but her manner is pleasing, and as a light comedy actress she may be expected to make her mark. *The Divided Way* was preceded by *The Misogynist*, a one-act play by Mr. G. W. Godfrey, of conventional pattern and indifferent quality, in which Mr. Alexander appeared as a woman-hating septuagenarian, a character that sits uneasily upon him. The remaining parts were effectively sustained by Mr. Allan Aynesworth, Mr. H. H. Vincent, and Miss Ellis Jeffreys.

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### A DANGEROUS RUFFIAN.

A Comedy, in One Act, by W. D. HOWELLS. Produced at the Avenue Theatre, November 30.

Edward Roberts.. ..	Mr. WM. F. HAWTREY.	Mrs. Crashaw ..	Miss EVELYN HARRISON.
Willis Campbell.. ..	Mr. J. L. MACKAY.	Bella .. ..	Miss CLAYTON.
Mr Bemis .. ..	Mr. W. WYES.	Mrs. Roberts ..	Miss FLORENCE HARRINGTON.
Dr. Bemis, Jun... ..	Mr. E. HATFIELD.		

Mr. W. D. Howells is so well known as a novelist gifted with a fine and subtle style that it is difficult to reconcile the boisterous humours of *A Dangerous Ruffian* with the work which has already gained for him a high reputation. On the whole, we are disposed to deplore this excursion into a new field by a writer who obviously possesses neither the stage experience nor the dramatic instinct required to ensure success. The root-idea of the piece is fairly amusing, and in other hands might have been rendered effective. But working in an uncongenial—or at any rate unfamiliar—medium, Mr. Howells has signally failed to turn it to useful account. The plot deals with the difficulties experienced by a certain Mr. Roberts, who, believing that he has been robbed of his watch, pounces upon the supposed thief, and in turn relieves him of his. To his astonishment and dismay, however, he presently discovers the much-prized chronometer lying on his bureau at home, while his embarrassment is greatly increased by the appearance of his friend, Mr. Bemis, eager to relate how he has been waylaid and despoiled in a similar manner by an unknown ruffian, the latter being, of course, no other than Mr. Roberts. This imbroglio is worked out in a spirit of extravagant farce, and without any endeavour after fidelity of character-drawing or neatness of construction. Of the acting it is hardly needful to say more than that it was on a par with the piece.

The principal attraction at the Avenue is, however, *Mrs. Ponderbury's Past*, which since its production has been greatly brightened and improved, Mr. Burnand, the author, having been prevented by illness from giving his piece the attention and consideration at rehearsals that it would otherwise have received. The second act in particular has been thoroughly revised, the result being that the entire performance now goes with a roar from start to finish.

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### MR. VERSUS MRS.

An Incident, in One Act, by ARTHUR BOURCHIER and "MOUNTJOY." Produced at the Royalty Theatre, December 4.

Mr Robert Challenger	..	..	..	..	..	Mr. ARTHUR BOURCHIER.
The Hon. Mrs. Featherleigh	..	..	..	..	..	MISS VIOLET VANBRUGH.

Although *Mr. versus Mrs.* is in no way remarkable either for originality of idea or brilliancy of expression, the little piece will pass muster fairly well with the majority of its kind. The plot is simple. Mrs. Featherleigh, although obviously the spoiled darling of a doting husband, is so discontented with her lot that she seeks the assistance of Mr. Robert Challenger, a solicitor, and former admirer, to obtain a divorce. Singularly enough, she appears to be utterly ignorant of what constitutes legal grounds for such a demand, so as the speediest method of curing her folly, Challenger begins to make passionate love to her himself, pretending at the same time that her husband is below and eager to force his way into the room. By one of those singular coincidences not uncommon on the stage, pretence is changed into reality, and as the lawyer, after locking the door, has lost the key, the situation threatens to take a decidedly serious turn. All, however, ends happily. Neither Mr. Bouchier nor Miss Vanbrugh has, as yet, quite acquired that delicacy of touch and ease of manner required in light comedy, but otherwise they succeeded in giving a fairly satisfactory account of their respective parts.

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### MADAME.

An Absurdity in Three Acts, by James T. Tanner. Produced at the Opéra Comique Theatre, December 7.

George Baxter	..	..	Mr. FARREN SOUTAR.	Inspector	..	..	Mr. CULVERWELL.
Denton Jones	..	..	Mr. JAMES G. TAYLOR.	Mrs. Baxter	..	..	Miss KATE TINDALL.
Captain Charles Cameron	..	..	Mr. OSCAR ADYE.	Edith Galleon	..	..	Miss F. MONTGOMERY.
Monsieur Vivienne	..	..	Mr. E. H. KELLY.	Madame Vivienne	..	..	Miss HELEN VICARY.
Charlemagne	..	..	Mr. E. J. SCOTT.	Miss Godolphin	..	..	Miss EMMA GWYNNE.

Mr. Tanner apparently believes that by describing his piece as an "absurdity" he deprives the critic of any grounds for



complaint on the score of its utter imbecility and feebleness. Here, however, he falls into a palpable error, for it would be as reasonable to demand absolution for rascality merely because the perpetrator acknowledged himself to be a rogue. Whether a play be an "absurdity," an "irrationality," or a "monstrosity," we are quite prepared to welcome it, provided it interests or amuses. But *Madame* does neither, and possesses, consequently, no valid claim to existence. What is the precise nature of the story imagined by the author we frankly confess we do not know, as even the most assiduous and patient attention failed to make it clear to us. One thing, however, must have been patent to everyone—namely, the omission from the programme of the various inanimate objects with which lay the credit of contributing the chief part of the amusement created by the performance. As a step towards the repairing of this error, we consider it only just to mention the exquisite humour of the dressmaker's dummy, the lively sallies of an unregenerate fire-escape, and the fantastic drollery of several articles of household furniture. Beyond these it is only necessary to name Mr. Eric Lewis, who gave a pleasing and gentlemanly imitation of the Duke of Argyle; Mr. Farren Soutar, an exceedingly promising young comedian; Miss Kate Tindall and Miss Emma Gwynne, both of whom worked loyally and vigorously for the success of the piece. It may serve to remove any doubt on this latter point if we add that the author was not favoured with the customary summons to appear before the curtain in order to receive the congratulations of the audience.

KITTY CLIVE (ACTRESS).

A Comedy, in One Act, by Frankfort Moore. Produced at the Royalty Theatre, December 11.

Kitty Clive	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	Miss IRENE VANBRUGH.
Jack Bates	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	Mr. HENRY VIBART.
Landlord ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	Mr. F. W. PERMAIN.

Out of a somewhat threadbare theme Mr. Frankfort Moore has fashioned an exceedingly bright and lively little comedy, The story of an actress who employs her art in order to humble the arrogance of a conceited coxcomb has certainly little claim to originality; but in the present instance it is handled with so much freshness and humour as to render its narration, even for the hundredth time, thoroughly welcome. In the parlour of the King's Head Inn, the fair Kitty encounters a provincial actor named Jack Bates, who, little suspecting that he has to do with the famous actress, utilises the opportunity to air his opinions and criticise his betters. Nothing loth to read the newcomer a lesson, the mischievous Kitty gives rein to her fancy—badgers,

teases, cajoles, attracts, repulses, encourages, and chides the unsuspecting Bates, until, at length, completely vanquished, he drops at her feet only to find that he has been made a fool of. The little piece is smartly written; but the author would appear to have remained undecided to the last as to whether it was meant to be a comedy or a farce. A fair measure of brightness and charming audacity characterised Miss Irene Vanbrugh's rendering of the title-part, although it would be idle to pretend that she possesses either the experience or the ability to do it complete justice. Mr. Henry Vibart, as Bates, acted somewhat heavily, but not ineffectively.

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### IN THE PROVINCES.

Q.Q., with Mr. Edward Terry in what may be called the title-part (Quentin Quoins) was first seen on December 11th at the Prince's Theatre, Bristol. Mr. H. T. Johnson is the author, and the story may be briefly described as a variation of the plot of *Merrifield's Ghost*, now being seen at the Vaudeville Theatre. Quentin Quoins, a literary hack, and with a weakness for drink, becomes the "ghost" of Eric Thaine, an editor. Quoins bears the imposition with but occasional groans, until Thaine wishes to be considered the author of a play into which the former has put the very best work of which he is capable. Quoins flatly refuses; but Thaine obtains the play while his unfortunate hack is in a drunken sleep. In the last act the play is being produced, and after a fine scene between the two men, Quoins goes on to answer to the call of "author." This is the outline of the piece as far as Mr. Terry is concerned, and needless to say, he did full justice both to himself and to his author. Quoins is a part after Mr. Terry's own heart, replete with pathos, paternal love, and grim humour. No actor, save perhaps the historic Robson, could have improved upon the performance. Mr. Leslie Kenyon admirably portrayed the selfish and dishonest editor. It is understood that the play is shortly to be produced in London.

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### IN PARIS.

The death of M. Dumas removes from the scene the greatest dramatic genius of contemporary France, and the last of a series of writers whose plays belong to literature as well as the stage. The works of the clever men which fill the theatres of to-day form no doubt a transition to something better, in which subtler varieties of civilised man and his doings will be studied. At

present, like their brethren the painters, the current French dramatists, however, seem to be unable to detach themselves from an absorbing interest in *technique*, and, as a fact, it does show remarkable development, though at the expense of that inner undefinable thing which makes the difference between them and an Augier or a Dumas. The contemporary author labours in public, as it were. You see his straining after devices to strike the audience. The characters he needs for his novel and exceptional situations are exceptions. His dialogue is full of innuendoes, and his scenery of things which people recognise. Galipaux got up in the guise of a well-known dressmaker is the sort of thing that will draw, whatever the merits or demerits of the piece may be.

And so we have *Viveurs* at the Vaudeville, a comedy in four acts, by M. Henri Lavedan, one of the cleverer current playwrights, by the way, who in it paints a *fin-de-siècle* company, acknowledging no creed but that of enjoyment and no restraints of any kind. Nobody has ever seen and few heard of these peculiar members of refined society. It is very moral—in the end. One of the women of the foul crew, personated by Mlle. Réjane, gets disgusted, and makes splendid speeches about the horrid life she has been living. That was necessary after a couple of hours with bestiality. But the main thing is the *décor*, the realism! A fashionable ladies' tailor is there, just as in life! His "studio" is bodily transported to the stage, *clientèle*, *employées*, and all, just as in life! A fashionable restaurant is so true to life that spectators were pointing out the tables where certain well-known persons habitually lunch! In *Blague*, a comedy in three acts at the Odéon, by M. Pierre Valdagne, it is the lover of his friend's wife who is placed in the following dilemma, which cannot be called a common one. He is ruined by a fire, and is about to take his ticket for Norway, there to reconstruct his fortune in the timber-trade. His *liaison*, which has hitherto been a sort of distraction without any real affection (hence apparently the title), has turned into love, and the lady has determined to run off with him. At this juncture her husband turns up with a fortune for his faithless friend, due to lucky speculations with some money left by the latter in his keeping. Is the lover to refuse the money and elope with the wife, or to keep the money and turn away the wife, or decline both the money and the wife, or stay at home and keep the money and the wife too? He adopts the latter course. That is all. The public did not seem to think this quite orthodox enough.

From these pieces one turns with pleasure to A. de Vigny's translation of *Othello* at the Odéon, and the Hindu idyll



*Sakuntala*, at the Théâtre de l'Œuvre. This is the first time the latter has been given in France as a drama, though Gautier made a ballet of it to the music of Ernest Reyer, which was given at the Opera in 1858. In Germany, on the contrary, the work, it seems, has been played several times. For the present occasion it was shortened, and, as we think, not very adroitly, by letting the King recover his lady-love at the Hermitage, which leaves much unexplained. Gratitude, however, is due to M. Lugué-Poë for this further production of his historical series. Mlle. Suzanne Dorlaus, at the Théâtre Parisien continues her series of one-act pieces. *Au Dessert*, by M. Lavedan, with M. Matral (of the Odéon) as an *artiste de cuisine*, was delightful.

Of the other pieces of the month, we may mention *Le Remplaçant* at the Palais Royal, by M.M. Busnach and Duval, and *Le Capitaine Floréal*, by M.M. Moreau and Depré at the Ambigu. *Le Remplaçant* is based on the same idea as the *Jocrisses du Divorce*, of which we spoke last month. *Le Capitaine Floréal* is a stirring melodrama of battles, duels, true love, and the eventual strangling of the villain by the hero in spite of all impossibilities.

Of a very different stamp from all this is the quasi-historical drama in verse by M. Henri de Bornier, *Le Fils de l'Arétin*, at the Théâtre Français. The author has a distant moral object in this piece, derived from the life of the intellectual bandit whose name it bears, namely, to show the continuing evil wrought by evil doing. L'Arétin is punished in the corruption, by his own writings, of his son. When he has himself become a repentant sinner, his son carries his own past cynical theories into practice. It is the father who expiates his past life by terminating that of his son, and thus arresting his villainy.

"J'ai tué mon fils," he exclaims in agony. "Père, tu l'as sauvé."

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## IN BERLIN.

This city has witnessed quite a large number of interesting novelties during the last few weeks. Sir Arthur Sullivan's *Ivanhoe*, which had been so long and so often postponed, has at last been performed at the Royal Opera House. There was a very brilliant audience on the first night, and the Emperor and Empress were present. Sir Arthur was summoned to the royal box by the Emperor and warmly congratulated on his work, which, it should be added, was admirably rendered. The opera, far from being a mere *succès de curiosité*, is drawing large and



appreciative audiences, and is frequently in the bill of the Royal Opera House.

On December 10th, Mrs. Scott-Siddons gave a dramatic recital, under the patronage of the British Ambassador, in the Grand Hall of the Hotel der Reichshof. The appearance of this gifted lady was awaited with interest by many of the more educated residents in Berlin, and her recital was much enjoyed by those who attended it. Mme. Judie has been playing at the Neves Theatre in *Niniche*, *Lili*, *La Femme à Papa*, and *Le Parfum*. The fashion has now been set for French comedians to visit Berlin, and Mme. Judie has no reason to regret having followed it. She has been very cordially welcomed, and her inimitable cleverness has drawn large audiences to the Neves Theatre. The Berliners are not deficient in humour, and can appreciate a witty French play as well as the rest of the world, in spite of the appearance of Teutonic phlegm, which is apt to lead one astray in estimating their character. In *Pan Cezar*, a drama in four acts, by A. Weber, produced at the Berliner Theatre, the author, a lady, has written a play full of strong sensational episodes. The attachment of two brothers for the same girl—a beautiful and passionate creature—is the mainspring of the piece. The action is laid in Poland, during the Austro-Prussian war of thirty years ago. One of the brothers is compelled to go to the war, and the bewitching but unprincipled Anastasia Dembinska, who has plighted her troth to the soldier, takes advantage of her opportunity to cast the spell of her charm over the brother who remains behind. When the soldier, who has been wounded, comes home again, she gives him a rendezvous in a dangerous swamp, where he meets his death. The man on whom she has conferred her affection learns from her lips of the plan she has formed to kill his brother. His whole nature revolts at it, and he rushes out of the house in time only to die with the ill-fated and much injured man; while the woman, who has followed them, falls senseless to the ground as she sees what her diabolical designs have achieved.

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#### IN ITALIAN CITIES.

*Ninon de L'Enclos*, the perennial, has once more been adopted as the subject, and at the same time as the title, of an opera. The character seems, indeed, to have a powerful fascination for French and Italian composers and dramatists, and quite a number of operatic efforts, in which she has been the central figure, have been put upon the stage, in many cases, however,

only to die an early and obscure death. The best known and the most successful of these productions is probably *Ninon chez Madame de Sévigné*, an opera in one act, composed by Berton, the author of *Alina*, and produced at the Théâtre Feydeau, Paris, in the year 1808. The authors of the new work are the brothers Antonio and Gaetano Cipollini, Antonio having written the libretto, and Gaetano the music. From the long life of the famous beauty, the librettist has selected the period when, in the time of Louis XIII., Ninon, though far beyond the ordinary years of early womanhood, with all her youthful graces still at her command, reigned supreme among her sex. At the opening of the opera her hand is being sought by Jarnac, Duc de Narbonne, the Vicomte de Montfort, and several other suitors of less distinction ; but disappointment proves to be in store for all these gentlemen, inasmuch that the caprice of the moment inclines the lady's affections towards the Marquis d'Estrés, a handsome young painter. In the midst of a heated altercation between the Marquis and his defeated rivals, a new turn is given to affairs by the appearance of Mathilde, the Marquis's deserted wife, who has come to consult Ninon, an expert in such matters, as to the best means of winning back the erring affections of her spouse. Introducing herself to the heroine under the assumed name of Madame de Failly, the Marquise states her errand, and in subsequently following out the advice which Ninon, then in ignorance of her personality, willingly tenders her, arouses jealousy in the heart of her husband by an assumption of indifference to his conduct, and by pretending to feel a preference for the company of Montfort and Jarnac. The third act, which is now reached, consists of a masked ball held in the gardens of the Palais Royal, at which all the chief personages of the story are present. By this time the Marquis's newly-awakened jealousy at his wife's behaviour has become acute, and when Ninon proposes that they shall retire to a distant castle to spend the remainder of their days together, he arouses her bitterest anger by a point blank refusal. Ninon, who sees only too well that both Jarnac and Montfort are captivated by the charms of the Marquise, resolves to take revenge upon all three of her former lovers, and to that end asks the Marquise to exchange dominoes with her. This the deserted wife is naturally only too glad to do, and, the exchange having been effected, she has the satisfaction, while personating Ninon, of listening to a renunciation from her husband's lips of all affection for that lady, and an avowal of love for herself alone. The new work was accorded a very flattering reception, and bears promise of lasting favour. The part of the heroine was well rendered by Signorina

Passeri, and that of Mathilde with no less skill by Signora Locatelli.

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## IN VIENNA.

At the Deutsches Volkstheater *Untreu* (*Faithless*), a comedy in three acts, by Robert Bracco, translated into German by Otto Eisenschütz, has been given for the first time. The author is witty and amusing, and in this play he has selected for the exercise of his wit a subject which is inexhaustible. He treats of a woman and of women. His psychology has often the sharpness of a knife, and the flashing of the polished steel. He jests, mocks, is ironical and sarcastic, winsome and coaxing by turns; and yet when one looks closely into his work, one finds that, while it seems almost like the work of a man to whom love is a real and sacred thing, it really lacks the essentials of love,—enthusiasm and delight, pleading and self-surrender. The love which he describes is a kind of animal magnetism influencing man and woman. He knows every phase of this kind of love, and in *Untreu* he has described it so cleverly that the comedy met with a cordial and well-deserved reception on its first performance. A young wife demands of her husband, whom she loves, absolute confidence in her fidelity. She may legitimately do this, for she is really loyal. At the same time she is an incorrigible flirt; is never tired of the amusement she derives from the society of the opposite sex; allows herself to be courted, is curious about new sensations, and warms her hands at the glowing fires of the hearts of her male acquaintances and friends. One of these gentlemen tells her to her face that she is only virtuous from fear of the consequences of not being so. He challenges her to a real trial of strength, confessing that he is tired of trifling. She takes up the guantlet which he throws down, and goes to see him at his house. When there she plays with him as an angler does a fish; but, unfortunately for her domestic happiness, in the middle of her skilful fooling of her admirer, her husband comes in. He finds the game the reverse of amusing, and does not believe that his wife has only been carrying on an innocent flirtation. For two months their lives are made miserable, and their home seems likely to be the scene of a tragedy. Then love gets the upper hand of the husband's jealousy; he seeks to deaden his suspicions, and is on the point of forgiving the wife he believes to be guilty. She, on the other hand, knowing herself to be innocent, is enraged at her husband's jealousy; but at length love conquers her resentment also, and the couple are reconciled, the unhappy and unsuccessful lover being dismissed by both with scorn. As will be gathered from what has been



said, there is much talk of love and fidelity in this play ; and for those who can attach the same meaning to the words that the author does, there is plenty to relish and laugh at in it. *Untreu* may be called a sexual comedy, and it is perhaps not surprising that there were not a few in the theatre who were shocked at it, and who did not take the trouble to dissemble the fact. It was admirably acted.

*Waldmeister*, an operetta in three acts, by G. Davis, the music by Strauss, has been performed at the Theater an der Wien. It is amusing from beginning to end, and in this respect differs from some of its predecessors, which have had their tragic or their sentimental passages. There can hardly be said to be any definite plot in this thoroughly Austrian, thoroughly Viennese comic opera. A merry party out for a picnic are overtaken by a storm, and seek refuge in a mill. There they change their wet clothes for others provided by the miller, and re-appear as peasants. The ladies of the party are headed by the popular Pauline, a pretty singer, and the men are mostly students at a school of forestry. The latter are followed with indignation by the head of the school, Forest-Councillor Tymolien von Gerius, but he cannot discover his unruly pupils, because they have concealed themselves in the mill. Only the merry Pauline remains in the room, dressed like the miller's wife. She is resolved to avenge herself on the Forest-Councillor for the denunciations of the fraternity of singers to which he had given utterance some time before. She resolves to make him fall in love with her—by no means a difficult task, and as they stand embraced, the whole company enters the room to the triumph of Pauline, and the confusion and disgrace of the Forest-Councillor. There are many complications in *Waldmeister*. A botanist and professor—a very amusing character—is mistaken by the Forest-Councillor for the miller who has just been wronged by the attempt made upon the loyalty of his (supposed) wife. The botanist enters into the joke and demands satisfaction, and this leads to many diverting incidents. There is plenty of love-making in the piece, and in the end the comedy of errors is satisfactorily wound up, the Forest-Councillor finding himself entangled for ever in the meshes of the pretty singer's net.

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#### SIR HENRY IRVING IN NEW YORK.

No ordinary interest was excited in New York last month by the production of *King Arthur*, with Sir Henry Irving and Miss Ellen Terry in the principal parts. Expectation ran high, but was in no sense disappointed. "If any in the house," said



the *World* on the following morning, "were unimpressed last night at Abbey's Theatre by the beauty, the artistic charm, the harmony and taste which marked the latest, and perhaps most wondrous stage production that we owe to Henry Irving, let him hold his peace. He is a Goth—a cross Bœtian boor—bereft of soul and sight. *King Arthur*, the romantic four-act play by Comyns Carr, which has at last been seen here, was the chief event of the dramatic season in the English capital this year. And while it may not be accorded the same dominant importance here, it cannot fail to witch all those of us who love the sensuous and the tender sides of art." "*King Arthur*," says the *Tribune*, "is a good play—as good a play as could be made upon a subject that is mystical and symbolical rather than largely dramatic—and the production of it was beautiful as a spectacle and authoritative and interesting as a performance. A great company of sympathetic and appreciative spectators witnessed the representation, and received it with many denotements of deep delight. There were at least four calls after each curtain, and at the close Irving had to respond with a speech. Ellen Terry has given performances in which there were greater moments than any that signalled her portrayal of Guinevere, but she has given no performance that was more definite, more smoothly rounded, or more evenly sustained. . . . With her strange wild beauty, her poetic frenzy, her endless caprice, her restlessness, her intuitional rather than intellectual methods, and her April temperament of smiles and tears, she embodied the part without the least show of effort—making it superb, enchanting, wayward, passionate, and piteous, throughout a typical episode of sin and sorrow." "It is not too much to say," remarks the *Spirit of the Times*, "that never before has a poetic play been so poetically placed upon the stage. The very atmosphere is that of the England of good King Arthur. Irving rises to the great heights of his genius as King Arthur. There are no more criticisms of his elocution, as there were in *Macbeth*; no more references to his mannerisms, which have now become his manner, his method, as much a part of his art as the manner or method of a Titian, a Beethoven, or a Phidias. The Guinevere of Ellen Terry is more than a companion picture; it is a companion soul." No less attractive were *Louis XI.*, *Faust*, *Becket*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *The Lyons Mail*.

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A set-off to the brilliant series of revivals at Abbey's Theatre, which crowds fight every evening to see, are the modern "musical comedies," of which we have to record this month

no fewer than four new specimens. *The Shop Girl* and *His Excellency* still fill their respective theatres, while of the new ones, *The Wizard of the Nile*, is, perhaps, best deserving of first mention. Mr. H. B. Smith and Mr. Victor Herbert are the authors of the book and of the music respectively, Mr. Frank Daniels and Miss Dorothy Morton are the principal players, and the whole production was decidedly above the average. *The Merry Countess* at the Garrick was not nearly so good. Adapted by Mr. Charles Klein from *Niniche*, and set to music by Johann Brandl, it was withdrawn after very few performances. A bowdlerised version of the original, combined with unattractive music, gave the piece a *quietus* that even the sprightly acting of Miss Marie Jansen could not avert. *The Bicycle Girl*, by Mr. L. Harrison, is a burlesque upon the new woman and the "bloomer" costume. Miss Nellie McHenry perhaps over-acted her part, but in this class of entertainment that is not perhaps a fault. At the Fourteenth Street Theatre, *A Happy Little Home*, understood to be the work of Mr. Charles Klein, affords Mr. G. W. Monroe the opportunity of shining as an Irish house-keeper of an uncertain temperament. An adaptation of Herr Sudermann's *Die Ehre* has been presented at the Standard Theatre. Mr. Frederick de Belleville as Count Traste, and Miss Fanny Rouse as Mrs. Hartmann, were the best of an excellent cast. Mlle. Jane May delighted the patrons of Daly's Theatre for a few nights by her graceful pantomime acting in *Mademoiselle Pygmalion*. Mr. Carton's play, *The Home Secretary*, has been produced at the Lyceum Theatre, with Mr. Herbert Kelcey and Mr. J. K. Hackett as the Cabinet Minister and the Anarchist respectively. Miss Isabella Irving was the Rhoda Trendel, and all three performances were artistic and telling. The play was well received. Miss Olga Nethersole has appeared in Mr. Clement Scott's adaptation of *Denise*, and has received unstinted praise, though the company that supports her is much criticised.

At the Garrick Theatre, Mr. Richard Mansfield has produced *The Story of Rodion*, a hybrid sort of play by Mr. C. H. Meltzer. This eminent critic of the *New York World* has sought inspiration from the pages of a Russian novel, and, in order to counteract any dulness that might possibly creep in, has imported into it ideas from a French play. It is a strange admixture. Rodion is starving and in love. He commits a murder for revenge and gain, and as a *finale* to the play he is arrested for his crime on his own confession. Mr. Mansfield finds his finest opportunity in depicting the murderer's remorse. We regret to add that *The Story of Rodion* has proved so unsuccessful that Mr. Mansfield has withdrawn from the management of the Garrick.

## Echoes from the Green Room.

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No proof of the admiration and affection in which Sir Henry Irving is held in New York has been wanting during his recent engagement in that city. He might say, with Voltaire, "You smother me with roses." On November 16th he was entertained at what is described as the most elaborate supper yet held at the Lotos Club, which was superbly decorated for the occasion. The guests numbered three hundred. During the evening he was presented by the club with a silver loving-cup, urn shaped, with designs representing some of the principal characters in which he appears. An original poem to the guest, by J. Ringgold McCoy, was read by its author. In this it was said :—

The drama in the world of art  
Her prestige never loses ;  
She wields her sceptre as of old,  
Queen regent of the Muses.  
Sir Henry Irving stands to-day,  
Their spirits hovering o'er him,  
Epitome of all the great  
Who lived and died before him.

MR. FRANK LAWRENCE took the chair. He paid a warm tribute to the guest of the evening, recalling the old friendship that existed between him and the Lotos Club, at whose table he made his first appearance in America, and referring to him as "a later greater Garrick, who stood, at the end of the nineteenth century, by the common consent of all English-speaking people, in so exalted a position." "Such a greeting as yours," said Sir Henry Irving in reply, "robs one of words as one looks on your friendly faces and sees the bright sparkle of your friendly eyes. The memories of this club are very dear to me, and the good will of its members is dearer to me still. I remember when I first set foot on American soil, on your beloved country, it added a new interest to my life. The members of the Lotos Club were the first to bid me welcome and to extend to me that strong grip of friendship and good fellowship that has never, never relaxed. Your other home was also a very comfortable and happy home. Your president was a very honoured and esteemed friend of mine, Mr. Whitelaw Reid, and so was your vice-president, General Horace Porter. I remember how your president, in extending the cordial greeting of your club, playfully warned me that I must not mistake the enthusiasm of the members of the club for the applause of the audience at the Star Theatre on almost the following night. 'What the newspapers will say on Tuesday morning,' said he, 'alas, the mind of man knoweth not.' Well, the scales turned in my favour, and the generous approbation of the New York public made it kick the beam, and has ever kept it in that position. I should be a dullard and a less grateful man than I am if I did not look back with renewed delight to the day when I first saw your shores and the time when I first saw you. I thank you, members of the Lotos Club, for the gracious and kindly way in which you have received the kindly words of your president to-night. Again I thank you with all my heart and soul. I count myself in nothing else so happy as in a soul remembering good friends, and it is my dearest



hope I may ever retain the esteem and friendship—and I would say it, if I might, the affection—which has found expression in a form that not only confers distinction upon myself as an actor, but on the art which you love so well.”

MR. BRONSON HOWARD, as a representative of the American drama, made a pleasant little speech. He said that he had been asked, a few weeks ago, to prepare a set of resolutions for the American Dramatists' Club, congratulating Sir Henry Irving on the honour recently conferred upon him by the Queen of England. “He is trying to think now,” said Mr. Howard, looking at the actor, whose thoughtful attitude opened the way for the sally, “whether, among a great number of such testimonials, he received one from us or not. I will relieve his mind by saying he did not; we didn't send any. So far as I was concerned, I refused; but I offered to draw up a resolution congratulating the British Government on the honour it had conferred upon itself. That was declined, and then I began to wonder anyway whether an institution of seventy members in New York was big enough to open negotiations with a European Power. I came to the conclusion that anyway honours were easy between Sir Henry Irving and Great Britain. The great statesmen who, after Cabinet discussion, presented the name of our guest to their Sovereign, were unconsciously, perhaps, of the exact reasons which led them to do so. There have been a few distinguished men in history who have risen above their own achievements and become representatives to us of great events in human society. These are to us the landmarks of human progress. Henry Irving is one of them. For the first time in history the art of the stage thoroughly respects itself, and compels the whole world to respect it. In spite of the influence society has allowed its bad members to exert against it, almost throughout history, the stage has fought its battles alone the whole time, and it has won its last campaign in Henry Irving. He stands where future historians must look back to him as an object illustrating one great phase in the social evolution of the race. All true knights in England who could understand their own rights felt prouder of their own titles because such a man consented to become one of them, and we here in America are one with the English people when, down in the depths of our hearts, in the privacy there, we honour only the man himself.”

ONE speaker was Mr. Smalley, the New York correspondent of *The Times*. “I think,” he remarked, “it may be said that Sir Henry Irving shines in a double light—his own and that of the men who reflect his teachings and his example. A word has been a good deal used lately—‘international.’ Sir Henry Irving is an international tie, the validity of which I think no jingo would dispute. Mr. Gladstone was once asked to confer knighthood on a certain person who needn't be named. ‘But it's only a knighthood; it doesn't matter,’ it was said. ‘Sir,’ said Mr. Gladstone, ‘you don't seem to remember that knighthood is the foundation of the whole scheme of honour of which the Queen is the source, and that there is no honour the conferring of which is more carefully considered than that of knighthood.’”

ANOTHER remarkable entertainment for Sir Henry Irving was provided by the New York Press Club on November 11th. In the course of the supper Mr. Howard presented him with a pen-and-ink sketch by Mr. Tom Nast, representing Uncle Sam handing to him a loving-cup. Underneath was the inscription, “Here's to Sir Henry right royally knighted, he who has so royally knighted many of my countrymen at the Lyceum, who has



proven that acting is an art, and himself its most brilliant champion." Over the heads of Sir Henry and brother Sam is a sketch of the Stratford bust of Shakspeare.

THERE was a striking scene in the library of Columbia College on November 27th, when Sir Henry Irving repeated there his lecture on *Macbeth*. All the professors were present, besides many distinguished visitors. Loud cheers were raised by all as the lecturer entered and left.

NEW YORK journalists are holding up their hands in amazement at what they think Sir Henry Irving's youthful buoyancy. *King Arthur* in the afternoon, *Becket* in the evening, midnight supper at the Lotos Club, lively conversation until 6 a.m., reception at the Plaza Hotel in the afternoon, dinner in company with a few old friends in the evening—such was his record for Saturday, November 16th, and Sunday, November 17th.

MISS ELLEN TERRY, too, finds herself the recipient of many tributes of affection and esteem from the American people, who have had more than one opportunity of verifying what all her English friends say of her, namely, that she is even more fascinating off the stage than on it—however impossible that may seem. She has been entertained by the Professional Women's League, and in a graceful little speech spoke of the delight she had felt in seeing the performance of Mme. Janauschek as Jaques in *As You Like It*. Nearly every prominent actress then in New York was at the reception.

THE widespread admiration felt for Mr. Hare found striking expression towards the end of November, on the occasion of the dinner given to him in the Whitehall Rooms of the Hôtel Métropole, just before his departure for America. The Duke of Fife presided, and the company, numbering over two hundred and fifty in all, was one of the most representative that could have been desired. The chairman, in proposing the toast of the evening, paid a high tribute, as an old friend, to Mr. Hare, who, notwithstanding an emotion not unnatural in the circumstances, made a graceful reply. Mr. Pinero proposed "The Drama," and, after a little good-humoured banter at the expense of Mr. Comyns Carr, who had to reply, incidentally defended the problem play as being at least "earnest drama."

MEMORABLE in all respects was the scene at the Lyceum on November 22nd, when Mrs. Keeley was presented with an address of congratulation on the completion of her ninetieth year. In spite of increased prices of admission, the house was crowded from floor to ceiling, the receipts amounting to no less than £696. All of this will go in charity, as Mrs. Keeley is not in want of money. The entertainment comprised scenes from *Romeo and Juliet*, *Tribby*, *The Squire of Dames*, *Gentleman Joe*, and *Liberty Hall*. In the midst of this Mrs. Keeley held a reception on the stage, and had the satisfaction of seeing around her an almost unique gathering of the members of her old profession. The address of congratulation was spoken by Mrs. John Wood, and was in every way appropriate to the occasion. Mrs. Keeley, whose voice was so clear and firm that everybody in the theatre must have understood her, expressed a grateful sense of the honour she received, recalling the fact that she made her first appearance in London at that same theatre as long ago as 1825. Sir Henry Irving and Miss Terry, in the name of the whole Lyceum company, sent her "an affectionate greeting across the sea."

WHETHER Mr. Pinero will have another play ready before the autumn of next year, or whether we shall have to wait for a successor to

*The Benefit of the Doubt* until Mr. Alexander then produces the piece for which he has recently engaged Mr. and Mrs. Fred Terry, seems at present doubtful. Why, in the meantime, should not Mr. Pinero consent to be frivolous for a space, and give us another of his delightful farces? By so doing he would earn the gratitude of all playgoers, even perhaps of those strangely constituted persons who found *The Benefit of the Doubt* uninteresting.

By the time these pages are read, the new romantic play by Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, entitled *Michael and his Lost Angel*, will be almost ready for production at the Lyceum. *Romeo and Juliet* will then have been running for about fourteen weeks. Quite a long run when one considers that *Charley's Aunt* is only in its fourth year, and that *The Shop Girl* is not so very much past its twelfth month.

EARLY in the year Mr. Alexander will produce Mr. Edward Rose's adaptation of *The Prisoner of Zenda*, the cast including himself, Mr. Herbert Waring, Miss Lily Hanbury, Mr. Charles Glenney, and Miss Evelyn Millard.

THE prospects of *The Bric-à-Brac Will* have been much improved by the appearance in it of Miss St. John, who retains all her power to delight an audience.

IN Mr. George Augustus Sala, who died at Brighton on December 8th, *The Theatre* loses a good and valued friend. One of his latest promises, it may be mentioned, was to write for us an article on the progress of stage scenery during his time. He had a special claim to be heard on the subject, having begun life as an assistant to William Beverley in the painting room of the Princess's Theatre. He did not excel in this way, but earned a modest salary of fifteen shillings a week by making himself generally useful. "In fact," he writes, "I may say that I have done almost everything in a theatre except act. For the histrionic profession I never had the slightest inclination." Nauseated by these juvenile experiences, the clever, indefatigable journalist and essayist, as he soon afterwards became, was seldom to be seen in a theatre. "Oddly enough," he wrote last year, "although I have taken a strong interest in the drama and in things dramatic, and have numbered among my friends some of the most eminent professors of the dramatic art, I have always had, from my early manhood, an intense dislike for witnessing dramatic performances. I am passionately fond of the opera, but I don't like the play." He was the author of an unsuccessful burlesque, *Wat Tyler, M.P.*, produced at the Gaiety in 1869.

MR. SALA seemed to be as well known by sight in England as are the most prominent of public men. Not long ago a French journalist wrote to him, but could not remember his name or address. In this emergency the intelligent foreigner stuck a photograph of Mr. Sala on the envelope, writing underneath it nothing but "Londres, Angleterre." The letter reached St. Martin's-le-Grand in due course,—and was promptly delivered at the office of the *Daily Telegraph*.

MORE signs of a *rapprochement* between the Church and the Stage. Preaching in Rochdale parish church at the end of last month, Archdeacon Wilson pointedly referred to *The Sign of the Cross*, which had been produced in that town a few days before. "This fine and striking drama," he said, "has helped many to understand the Book of Revelation as they never understood it before; it has convinced us that for such a faith as those martyrs showed in the person and life and death of a Divine Christ there must have been a solid and true and real foundation; and has, I think,

forced in upon our hearts the fundamental lesson that self-sacrifice is of the essence of Christianity, and that without it Christianity easily passes into an organised hypocrisy." *The Sign of the Cross* has everywhere proved most successful crowds being turned away night after night at Bristol.

MR. HERKOMER has a claim to be heard on the subject of scenic art, not only as a painter, but as a practical theatre manager, since the performances he has organised at Bushey have attracted wide attention and earned hearty praise. In his recent lecture on the subject to the Architectural Association, however, he dealt not so much with the practical as with the ideal. Abolition of footlights, complete change in the construction of theatres, a proscenium that could be contracted and expanded at will, the devotion of as much attention to the "make-up" of a background as to the "make-up" of an actor's countenance—these were some of the points upon which he laid stress, adducing cogent arguments, it must be admitted, in favour of his advocated reforms.

It is to be feared that such reforms are not likely to take effect at once. Still, architects of playhouses might endeavour to do what they can in the directions indicated, if managers could be induced to give consent; and at any rate it is interesting to hear a clever man's suggestions on such points, and good that they should be thought worthy of discussion.

MR. BANCROFT afforded great pleasure to a number of people by the kindly thought which prompted him to give readings of Dickens's *Christmas Carol* at a City Institute and at Eton and Harrow. It is well that our public school boys, as well as those for whose entertainment the Rev. William Rogers devised his Bishopsgate Institute, should be made acquainted with so characteristic a product of the great humorist's genius, and well, too, that due effect should be given to its tenderness and its fun by so skilled an actor and elocutionist as Mr. Bancroft.

WHILE his father is thus coming out in a new line, Mr. George Bancroft is said to be intending to make his first appearance on the stage in Mr. Alexander's acting version of the *Prisoner of Zenda*.

MR. LAWRENCE IRVING has appeared at Plymouth as Svengali. For so young an actor it is a remarkably fine performance, and will be repeated at nearly all the large provincial towns.

THE out-of-town *matinée* system is rapidly being extended. For some years past companies playing in London have given afternoon performances at Brighton and Eastbourne, and on one occasion Mr. Tree managed to get as far as Birmingham. Mr. Bouchier, as becomes an energetic manager, has taken the system in hand, and is to be heard of in all parts of the south and west of England, while still continuing as successfully as ever the run of *The Chili Widow* at the Royalty. Three times has he taken his company to Brighton, and twice to Portsmouth. He managed the other day to get so far afield as Boscombe, and has even arranged a performance at Bristol for one afternoon before long.

HERE is a story—we do not vouch for the truth of it—about Sir Augustus Harris. Ever on the watch for new talent, he is frequently trying the voices of new aspirants. On one occasion, a somewhat self-conscious young tenor presented himself to Sir Augustus, and asked to be heard. He was shown up. An accompanist sat at a piano, the *entrepreneur* stood at the other end of the room, and the young man began. The manager, apparently listening intently, kept his eyes fixed upon the floor. The tenor finished, and there was a long interval of silence broken at last by Sir Augustus



who, quickly calling his treasurer, asked, "How much a yard did you give for this carpet?"

WE have to congratulate Mr. Herbert Waring on his skill as a golfer as well as upon his talent as an actor and as a solo-whist player. In the Actors' Golf Tournament, held last month at Epsom, he tied for the leading place with another player, dividing the first prize. Mr. Rutland Barrington came in second, and amongst other actors who distinguished themselves were Mr. Frederick Kerr, Mr. Sydney Brough, Mr. Allan Aynesworth, and Mr. W. H. Denny.

WITH the subject-matter of Mr. Fitz-Gerald's article in our present issue we do not pretend to deal. *The Theatre* is a medium for the free expression of individual opinions, and we have neither the wish nor the right to question Mr. Fitz-Gerald's estimate of the dramatic critic, or "a large majority of him at any rate." But on a point of fact it is as well perhaps that he and our readers should be set right. Mr. Fitz-Gerald charges the Press generally, and no doubt includes ourselves among the number, with having "made use, from this daily paper of course, of the self-same unsaid, unsung, unuttered quatrain," and of having quoted it against the author. To the latter part of the accusation we cheerfully plead guilty. Indeed, only want of space prevented us from publishing several other choice specimens of Mr. Fitz-Gerald's lyrical ability. Mr. Fitz-Gerald, however, must not conclude from the circumstance that *The Theatre* is dependent upon other papers for its criticisms or its matter. As a matter of fact, the quatrain was taken from the "book of the words" generously supplied to our dramatic critic by the management on the night of the production of *The Bric-à-Brac Will*. On the title-page figured the statement, "Lyrics by S. J. Adair Fitz-Gerald." If, then, Mr. Fitz-Gerald did not indite that touching little exordium regarding the meaning of "the moon's late slant," who did? and why did Mr. Fitz-Gerald allow the words to appear with the authority of his name? Our contributor very aptly contends that the critic's function is "to give a just and true report of what he has seen and heard." But if the critic may not trust the evidence of the printed page to what is he to pin his faith? Perhaps Mr. Fitz-Gerald will kindly inform us.

MME. BERNHARDT, who has returned to Paris, has accepted a play by M. Bergerat, in which she will play the Empress Josephine.

ONE of the wreaths laid upon the coffin of M. Alexandre Dumas was by Mr. Comyns Carr in the names of English dramatic authors, Mr. Pinero, Mr. Gilbert, Mr. Grundy, Mr. Jones, Mr. Carton, Mr. Chambers, Mr. Barric and the rest.

AT certain performances in the Berlin Opera House no one is allowed to applaud unless the Emperor sets the example. On such occasions the opera house is treated practically as an annexe to the royal palace, and the entertainment is regarded chiefly as a social affair. Sometimes, as on the Emperor's birthday, all the spectators are invited guests, and even those who receive seats in the gallery must attend in evening dress. At other times, as on the occasion of the recent visit of the King of Portugal, the public is allowed to buy tickets to the upper part of the house, the parquet and lower tiers being reserved for the ladies and officers.

SOME years ago Berlin society was profoundly exercised by the appearance of Prince Bismarck and Mme. Pauline Lucca in one photograph. Indeed, so much was said that it was thought necessary to destroy the



negative. How the incident came about is related by M. Adolphe Kohut in his *Bismarck and Women*, recently brought out in Paris. "Mme. Lucca, standing one day at the door of her hotel, was spoken to by Prince Bismarck, with whom she was on friendly terms. 'Your excellency,' said the singer, 'I am going to the photographer; will you go with me?' 'Impossible; I am expecting someone on business.' 'Nonsense; you can transact your business later.' Refusal was impossible, and the statesman accompanied the singer to the photographer's. First of all a picture was taken of each separately. Then the singer, in her impetuous way, cried: 'Oh, your excellency, I have a capital idea. Let us have our pictures taken together.' Prince Bismarck could not refuse, and without any thought of the consequences, he allowed the photographer to proceed. A few days later the portrait of the most celebrated singer, with the most celebrated statesman of the time, was in every shop window, and for some time the matter was the talk of Europe."

REPORT says much of Signor Leoncavallo's new opera, *Thomas Chatterton* which is to appear early next year at Rome, and in which Queen Marguerite takes marked interest. Here, as in *I Pagliacci* and *I Medici*, the composer is his own librettist.

DURING the coming season at the Royal Opera House, Copenhagen, a new opera by Augustus Enna is likely to be produced. Its story is that of *Aucassin et Nicolette*, one of the most delightful and distinctive French tales of the Middle Ages. The work of the librettist ought not to be extremely difficult. As Mr. Frederick Hawkins points out in his history of the French stage, the piece is so dramatic in substance that only a few strokes of the pen are needed to convert it into an acting play.

MADAME BERNHARDT will appear at Abbey's Theatre, New York, on January 20. In addition to her usual repertory, she will be seen in *La Duchesse Catharine*, a new comedy in five acts, not yet given in Paris, and M. Alphonse Daudet's *L'Arlésienne*, with Bizet's incidental music to increase its effect. The non-production of the former in Paris is explained by the fact that the Société des Auteurs Dramatiques forbid the manager of a theatre to bring out in it a piece by himself.

MR. JEFFERSON, in a recent interview, denied emphatically a report that he contemplated retiring from the stage at the close of this season. He also profited by the occasion to pay a hearty tribute to Sir Henry Irving: "A wonderful man, who lives only for his art. There's not a mean bone in him. He spends money lavishly on his productions, and America owes him a debt of gratitude for what he has taught us about beautiful and accurate stage settings."

MISS NETHERSOLE has again been entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland at the White House. She has been particularly successful in *Denise*, and will produce that play on her return to London next May.

NEW YORK audiences have fallen completely in love with Miss Ellaline Terris. When Mr. Seymour Hicks returned the other day to look after the rehearsals of the Adelphi piece he has written with Mr. George Edwards, he had to leave his wife behind, so great was the popularity of her acting and singing. Eighty pounds a week was the sum offered to her for her extra month's engagement.

A CURIOUS incident occurred a few weeks ago in Pennsylvania. A répertoire company thought fit to play *The Hidden Hand* in five acts, but forgot to announce the fact on their programmes. The audience dispersed

at the end of the fourth act, believing that the piece was finished. The company duly appeared in the fifth act, though only to find themselves in an entirely deserted house.

MR. HOWE, though in his eighty-fourth year, has achieved a distinct success as a member of Sir Henry Irving's company, particularly by his performance of Duncan in *Macbeth*. Interviewed by the *Mirror*, he related a rather curious story. "In my early days I went into the pit at Covent Garden Theatre to see a Mr. Otway in *Venice Preserved*. He was a bad amateur; the audience hissed, and I joined in the chorus. Suddenly I felt a hand laid upon my arm by a gentleman sitting next to me. 'Please don't hiss,' he pleaded; 'he is a friend of mine.' We met often after that, and became very intimate. An amateur actor also, he once played Shylock at Houndsditch, I being his Antonio. That was my first appearance on the stage. 'I'm done for, Harry,' he once said. 'I am in a consumption, and cannot live two years if I stay in London. I shall go at once to Madeira, where I may live five years. We shall never see each other again.' He was right; he died exactly five years afterwards. Before leaving London he sent for me, and we went out together for a walk. 'Harry,' he said, 'I do not want to say good-bye to you. I could not bear it. As we go along the Strand I will stop at the first bookshop we come to and look at the books, and you go on without turning round. I have left you in my will one pound a week for life.' We walked up the Strand, and presently we came to a bookshop. He stopped; I passed on. When I got to some distance I could not help turning round, and I saw him standing in the same position, looking after me. We never met again." "Sir Henry," Mr. Howe went on, "is my ninth manager, and I need hardly say one of the kindest, one of the most scholarly, one of the most painstaking artists I have ever been connected with. The sums of money he spends on his productions, the study and time he devotes to make both the production and the interpretation as perfect as possible, are unprecedented in the annals of the stage. When Queen Victoria knighted him at Windsor, she added to the usual formula, 'I am very much pleased.' So were we all, for a truer knight, a truer friend, a better man has never breathed."

SOUTH AFRICAN playgoers owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Luscombe Searelle, the enterprising Johannesburg manager, who has just retired from business. During the seven years he has looked after their interests and provided entertainments for them he has taken out no fewer than thirty-two companies, consisting in all of about 500 persons. Not a bad record for a part of the world where ten years ago regular theatrical performances were not even dreamed of.



"THE THEATRE," FEBRUARY, 1896.



*Photographed by Alfred Ellis, 20, Upper Baker St., N.W.*

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MR. & MRS. EDMUND MAURICE.

(MISS ANNIE HUGHES.)



# THE THEATRE.

FEBRUARY, 1896.

## Our Watch Tower.

ENGLISH ACTING IN 1895.



IN reviewing last month "The Past Theatrical Year" we took occasion to refer to some of the most notable impersonations of the preceding twelvemonth. The subject, however, deserves some further treatment. True though it be that the actor cannot get on without the dramatist, unless he be a dramatist himself, it is equally true that successful plays are certain to owe very much to the artists by whom they are interpreted. A review, therefore, of 1895, as regards its dramatic productions, may very well be supplemented by a consideration of its histrionic features, which have been somewhat neglected by our contemporaries.

With the player, it may be said, opportunity is everything. The impression he makes must depend upon the material with which he is provided. Sometimes he is enabled by circumstances to surpass his previous record; too often all that he can do is at most to sustain his reputation. This latter must especially be the case with the actor and actress of established fame, who have already done so splendidly in the past that they can scarcely hope to excel themselves in the future. Mr. Beerbohm Tree, for example, has, in the course of his career, exhibited so much versatility that, even in an effective part like that of Svengali, he could hardly expect to improve upon the "villains" he had previously created. In the same way, Mr. Willard, as the remorseful gentleman in *Dick Halward*, and the kindly *deus ex machinâ* in *Alabama*, could do no more than repeat familiar successes. Mr. Hare's Duke of St. Olphert's in *Mrs. Ebbsmith* was just what one had a right to look for from a comedian so firm and finished; nor was there anything to

surprise, though there was much to please, in the *Home Secretary* and *Squire of Dames* of Mr. Wyndham. The Lucas Cleeve and the Romeo of Mr. Forbes Robertson showed that virile actor in characteristic moods. The Mercutio of Mr. Coghlan disappointed many; but, as the well-bred seducer in *A Woman's Reason*, that very experienced player at once recovered what ground he might be thought to have lost.

It is something if one merely continues to make one's mark, as, for example, Mr. Lewis Waller did both in *An Ideal Husband* and in *The Home Secretary*, and as Mr. Herbert Waring did both in *Guy Domville* and in *The Triumph of the Philistines*. In both instances the artist was at his best. Similar good fortune and good work were associated with Mr. Leonard Boyne and Mr. J. G. Grahame in *The Benefit of the Doubt*, in which both were happily cast. Of the younger men, Mr. W. T. Lovell has been well placed in *The Prude's Progress* and in *Alabama*, and Mr. Bernard Gould has not been altogether unlucky in his rôle in the latest of Criterion plays. Mr. H. V. Esmond, after over-straining his powers as the chief figure in his own *Bogey*, has recaptured his position as the Haymarket Little Billee. In *The Prude's Progress* and *The Benefit of the Doubt*, Mr. Cyril Maude has been excellently fitted; Mr. Sugden's Faulkland in *The Rivals* has once more testified to that actor's sense of artistic propriety; and in *An Ideal Husband*, *The Home Secretary*, and *A Woman's Reason*, Mr. C. H. Brookfield has forcibly reminded the public of his singular ability as a character-actor.

What, now, about the "old stagers," as the irreverent call them—the veterans of the boards, who never by any possibility fail to respond to the calls made upon them? Could anything have been better in its way than Mr. Fernandez' old Southerner in *Alabama*, Mr. William Rignold's plucky clergyman in *Cheer, Boys, Cheer*, Mr. George Warde's dignified Capulet in the Lyceum revival, Mr. Neville's chivalrous lover in the latest Drury Lane drama, Mr. W. H. Vernon's *père noble* in *The Divided Way*, and Mr. Alfred Bishop's short-memored Professor in *The Squire of Dames*? Mr. Mackintosh's knowledge of the stage served him well when he came to play the "villain" in *Delia Harding*. And the universally welcome comedians—what have they been doing? They have been doing all that we could ask from them—Mr. Righton in *The Prude's Progress* (a quite masterly performance), Mr. Blakeley in *The Chili Widow* and *An Artist's Model*, Mr. "Lal" Brough in *The Strange Adventures of Miss Brown*, Mr. Paulton in *Baron Golosh*, Mr. Lionel Rignold and Mr. Giddens in *Cheer, Boys, Cheer*, and Mr. Arthur Roberts in *Gentleman Joe*.

In each and all of these cases the popularity of the actor has been maintained.

The same pleasant tale has to be told of many of our lady players. One cannot well be more than charming and delightful; and so Miss Marion Terry, in *Guy Domville*, *A Leader of Men*, *Alabama*, and *Dick Halward*, has passed gracefully on from triumph to triumph, "gilding" each part "with the gracious gleam" of an engaging and accomplished personality. Miss Calhoun has maintained her high place in the histrionic hierarchy, alike in *Slaves of the Ring*, *Mrs. Ebbsmith*, and *Cheer, Boys, Cheer*. Miss Millward has recalled to us, by her work in *One of the Best*, the most forcible of her previous efforts. Miss Kate Rorke has been seen to advantage in *Slaves of the Ring*; Miss Annie Hughes has kept well to the fore in *A Story of Waterloo* and *The Professor's Love Story*; and in *The Prude's Progress* and *Her Advocate*, Miss Lena Ashwell has retained her hold upon the sympathies of playgoers.

There are artists so sound—so well-trained—that they cannot do otherwise than give a good account of themselves. Hence the more than respectable performance of Miss Drummond as the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, and hence the excellent effect obtained by Miss Maud Milton in various parts at the Lyceum. Among those who can do no artistic wrong is, assuredly, Miss Rose Leclercq, who, especially in *The Benefit of the Doubt* and *The Late Mr. Castello*, has been busily adding to her laurels. Mrs. John Wood, if not quite a satisfying Mrs. Malaprop, was wholly herself, and therefore wholly enjoyable, in *Vanity Fair*; and not less acceptable, in her way, was cheery Miss Victor in *Baron Golosh* and *Miss Brown*. Miss Kate Phillips, in *Slaves of the Ring*, *The Chili Widow*, and *The Manxman*; Miss Lottie Venne, in *Mrs. Ponderbury's Past*; Miss Alma Stanley, in *Fanny*; Miss Maud Millett, in *An Ideal Husband*; and Miss Letty Lind, in *An Artist's Model*—did they not all of them admirably fulfil the public's confident anticipations?

It is much, we repeat, to be able to respond to expectation; but how much more agreeable to be able to surpass it! This does not often happen to a player; as we have said, it can occur but rarely to a player of long and wide experience. Still, even to such it does occur sometimes. One would have thought, for example, that by this time Sir Henry Irving had reached the zenith of his achievement and his fame—that he could not place another stone upon the lofty monument of his genius as an actor. Nevertheless, what is the fact? We have his King Arthur, a worthy pendant to his Becket. We have his Gregory Brewster, which not only has been saluted as a masterpiece in histrionic



technique, but has obtained an overwhelming popularity. We have also his *Don Quixote*, in which the great creation of Cervantes lives and moves and has its being; and we have, too, his latest impersonation of Macbeth, re-touched and refined and mellowed into an interpretation as convincing as it is powerful. In a word, Sir Henry, during 1895, positively added to his brilliancy and acceptance as an artist. So, we think it will be conceded, did Mr. George Alexander in *The Divided Way*, in which he attained, at one point, to a height of passionate intensity to which he had not hitherto been required to soar. So did Mr. Arthur Bouchier, who, since he became the lessee and manager of the Royalty, has developed a light-comedy method notable for its ease, lightness, and refinement generally. In *Her Advocate*, Mr. Cartwright has exhibited unsuspected capacity for representing sympathetic character. In the same play, Mr. J. H. Barnes has for the first time indicated the possession of a vein of low comedy, and in the same play, again, Mr. C. W. Somerset rose to the level of a small but important part. Among other advances in artistic breadth and depth may be mentioned the appearances made by Mr. Charles Hawtrey in *An Ideal Husband*, and by Mr. Charles Fulton in *The Girl I Left Behind Me*. The former of these made it clear that Mr. Hawtrey is not a man of one groove only, but a comedian capable of distinctive personation.

Miss Ellen Terry, like Sir Henry Irving, is one of the great artists who grow. Her *Lady Macbeth*, as presented at the Lyceum in the late summer of last year, was, on its own plane, as fresh and finished an effort as was the *Macbeth* of her distinguished fellow-worker. Her *Guinevere*, we need not say, was quite ideal in its beauty. More recently, certain of our "leading ladies" have made a marked step forward. There is Miss Winifred Emery, for instance, who, in *The Benefit of the Doubt*, portrayed to the life an ill-bred, ill-regulated young woman, whose one lapse into unintentional intoxication she illustrated with a realism, yet an inoffensiveness, that betokened high intelligence and skill. There is, again, Mrs. Beerbohm Tree, who, as the heroine of *Fédora*, displayed a vigour and an abandon of which she had not till then been suspected. In the last act of *The Home Secretary* Miss Julia Neilson reached a hitherto unapproached point of sincerity and pathos; Miss Millard, in *The Divided Way*, quite discarded the self-consciousness which formerly had marred her endeavours; and in *A Woman's Reason* Miss Florence West, so admirable as the "villainess" in *An Ideal Husband*, has distinguished herself in the portrayal of a good-hearted, domesticated sister.



Other examples of professional progress will at once suggest themselves. One remembers how, in *The Home Secretary*, Miss Mary Moore suddenly revealed, as Mrs. Thorpe Didsbury, a very pretty feeling for comedy. One remembers, with regard to *The Passport*, the airy lightness exhibited by Miss Gertrude Kingston, so long associated with parts of the "adventuress" sort. Quite unusual was the measure of force shown in *The Benefit of the Doubt* by Miss Lily Hanbury, though hampered by a rôle of considerable sameness. Miss Granville, originally of the St. James's, has utilised her opportunities so well that in *The Squire of Dames* she speaks and moves with the confidence of an experienced *comédienne*. Miss Juliette Nesville is best known as a performer in musical comedy, but as Sally Leburne in Mr. Jones's play she has made it evident that, quite apart from her capacity as a singer, she is an artist of much piquancy and daring. Beginning as a vocal comedian, Miss Ellis Jeffreys has drifted into drama, making a special success as the clergyman's sister in *Mrs. Ebbsmith*. Miss Marie Hudspeth, in *The Rivals*, has proclaimed herself one of the best of available soubrettes. Last, but not least, there is that consummate mistress of comedy, Miss Fanny Brough, who increases yearly in histrionic breadth, and, in one passage of *Cheer, Boys, Cheer*, beats her record as an actress of variety and power.

A few notes on the younger players who in 1895 did especially well, and we have done. Let us take, first, the two sons of Sir Henry Irving, both of whom have been enlarging their acquaintance with, and command of, their art. In the English provinces Mr. H. B. Irving has appeared in some of the most difficult of classical parts—Shakspearean heroes—to the satisfaction of many competent judges. In London, Mr. Laurence Irving, as a swindling hypnotist in *The Lord Mayor*, has once more suggested that his turn, as an artist, is for eccentric comedy. Mr. Fuller Mellish has done particularly well in *A Story of Waterloo*, Mr. Frank Fenton has made a decided hit in *The Squire of Dames*, and Mr. G. W. Cockburn figured successfully in *The Manxman*. In light comedy Mr. Allan Aynesworth, at the St. James's, and Mr. Harcourt Beatty, at the Strand, have gained substantial favour. So have Mr. J. Coates and Mr. Henry Wright in musical comedy, and Mr. Farren Soutar and Mr. Robb Harwood in burlesque. The last-named has shown, in *Fanny* and *Miss Brown*, a keen appreciation of character—an appreciation likewise exhibited by Mr. C. M. Lowne in the representation of a young American which he contributed to *Thoroughbred*. Mr. Tom Terriss—who sang and danced well in *The Shop Girl*—has also come to the front in *Poor Mr. Potton*.

Where are the leading ladies of the future? From among whom will they be chosen? A prominent place, it may be prophesied, will be taken by Miss Esmé Beringer, whose growth in histrionic accomplishment is regular and cumulative. In *The Ladies' Idol*, *Miss Brown*, *The Benefit of the Doubt*, and *The Late Mr. Castello*, she has been increasingly praiseworthy. Considerable, too, has been the impression made by Miss Eva Moore (in *Bogey*), Miss Mary Allestree (in *The Girl I Left Behind Me*), Miss Eva Williams (in *The Benefit of the Doubt*), Miss Ettie Williams (in *The Prude's Progress*), Miss Irene Vanbrugh (in *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Kitty Clive*), Miss Grace Lane (in the Lyceum pantomime), and the Misses De Winton (at the Strand and elsewhere). How great a success has been made in *Trilby* by Miss Dorothea Baird we all well know. These young ladies, we may expect, will yet "go far"—"that which they have done but earnest of the things which they shall do." In the lighter departments of stage work a distinct advance has been effected by Miss Kate Cutler, whose *Modern Trilby* is as dainty as it is piquant; by Miss Florence Perry, now playing "lead" in *The Mikado*; and little Miss May Edouin, who, though rather *petite*, is a vivacious dancer and an expressive singer. Miss Ada Reeve, in *All Abroad*, and Miss Kitty Loftus, in *Gentleman Joe*, have both improved their artistic position, and Miss Ethel Haydon has more than fulfilled in *The Shop Girl* the promise she gave in *Dandy Dick Whittington*.

We had glimpses, during 1895, of artists of whom we should have liked to see more:—in *The Swordsman's Daughter*, Miss Marriott; in *The Triumph of the Philistines*, Lady Monckton; in *Delia Harding*, Miss Dorothy Dorr; in *An Ideal Husband*, Miss Helen Forsyth; in *Thoroughbred*, Miss Henrietta Watson; in *Dick Halward*, Miss Winifred Fraser; in *The Passport*, Miss Cicely Richards; in *Fanny*, Miss Lydia Cowell; in *The Brie-à-Brae Will*, Miss Florence St. John; in *The Taboo*, Miss Lizzie St. Quentin; in *Baron Golosh*, Miss Sylvia Grey; in the last-named and in *The Brie-à-Brae Will*, Mr. Frank Wyatt; in *The Passport*, Mr. Yorke Stephens; in *Bogey*, Mr. F. A. Everill. Let us hope that in the twelvemonth on which we have entered these players may all find ample occasion on which to charm and gratify us.

## Portraits.

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MR. AND MRS. EDMUND MAURICE.

IT was not without an ineffectual struggle against her good fortune that Miss Annie Hughes resigned herself to becoming known as an exceptionally bright and winning exponent of what are technically known as *ingénue* parts. In the amateur days which preceded her first professional appearance in 1885, her ambitious dreams were of the heroines of Shakspeare. Later on, when she was going through a course of lively Criterion pieces, she would fain have played sentimental heroines. But Mr. Wyndham's "Impossible with your mischievous face!" put an end to this notion, and at last the clever young actress was wise enough to see that he and the public were right, and to accept the very far from unpleasing situation. It was at the Criterion that Miss Hughes first came into notice. Of the many studies of wayward young womanhood which she has presented since then, several stand out clearly in the memory, while all were touched with a certain charm that specially distinguishes her acting. She was excellent in *Held by the Enemy*; very good as Nancy in *The Middleman* and as Maud Fretwell in *Sowing the Wind*. She only just fell short of achieving a great success as Naomi Tighe in *School* when this piece was revived at the Garrick in 1891; and she lent a charming touch of humour to *A Story of Waterloo* at the Lyceum. Mr. Edmund Maurice, the son of a distinguished army officer, who held the Victoria Cross, has been on the stage since 1880. He served faithfully a long period of apprenticeship to his art in the provinces and afterwards in London, with the result that he is now an excellent all-round actor, qualified to interpret successfully widely different parts. His versatility is shown by the fact that he has gained discriminating applause equally for his performances in modern plays, such as *Bootie's Baby*, in which he created the kindly, warm-hearted soldier upon whom the action centres, as for his study of the loutish squire in *Sowing the Wind*, or for so strongly marked a character part as he is now playing in *Trilby*. In these days of single part players, one who has real skill in characterisation, and can be counted upon for a capable rendering of any part entrusted to him, is pretty sure of engagements; and Mr. Maurice's association with so many of the most popular comedies and dramas of recent years shows that his undoubted ability has not gone unrecognised.



## The Round Table.

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### REMINISCENCES OF THE ROYALTY.

BY F. C. BURNAND.

#### II.

A T page seven of my article in *The Theatre* for January there occurred a curious ellipsis, which must have puzzled any attentive reader. The words "whether on the stage or in the front" were omitted. The sentence from last line at foot of page 7, continued at top of page 8, should have read thus: "quite a match for anybody, whether on the stage or in front of the house." This described the elder Miss Pelham, who was in stature Miss Pelham the less. What on earth induced these two sisters to adopt a profession for which their qualifications were of the scantiest will ever remain a mystery, at least to me. They must have made a considerable amount of money by the venture, though I fancy in only one instance did the total receipts exceed those brought in by *Ixion*, my first extravaganza written for the company under Mrs. Charles Selby's management.

Our leading burlesque actress was Mrs. Felix Rogers, playing as Miss Jenny Wilmore. She was a vivacious little woman, and soon made herself one of the leading Royalty favourites. She and her husband, as professionals knowing their business thoroughly, stood out from among the others, who were all of them, more or less, amateurs, or amateurish.

Whence Ada Cavendish came I do not know. She always posed as a sort of mysterious individual, and was, as to her dress, quite the Cinderella of the company. Had an elderly duke driven up to the stage door one day and claimed her as his long-lost child, or had she suddenly found a fairy godmother, and had her stuff gown of London-smoke colour been changed into gorgeous apparel, while diamonds sparkled in a coronet encircling her dark but not luxuriant hair, no one at the theatre would have been very much surprised. I think, in fact, we were rather disappointed because this did not happen. Poor Cinderella Cavendish was a hard-working, gentle girl, always more or less of an invalid, and most grateful for any attention to her physical comforts that could be given her. Frank Marshall, then fresh from Oxford, used to provide her with some of the best port out of his father's well-stocked cellar, and when she was ailing and unable to play, three or four of us used to send



hampers of various provisions to her lodgings. I remember my wife, who greatly pitied her for her fragile appearance, inviting her down to Richmond, where we were then living. I shall never forget how she astonished us both by her weird behaviour as she sat on the hearthrug before the fire in the drawing-room, with her hair down, talking in a wandering kind of way. Sometimes she would sit at the piano, and in a wayward fashion play fragments of tunes, chiefly with one hand, suddenly breaking off and leaving her hearers in doubt as to whether she were a musical genius, or had only the slightest acquaintance with the instrument, scarcely extending to reading the notes with anything like facility. Subsequently she recognised her own deficiencies, and went to work with a will to make up either for lost time or neglected opportunities. When I first met her she knew no language except her own, and from the careful manner in which she was accustomed to emphasise her aspirates in such monosyllables as "when, what, why," it occurred to me that either she was of Irish extraction, or that this was the result of Mrs. Selby's judicious training. Her singing voice was not much, and what there was of it sounded to greater advantage when unaccompanied, unless the pianist was so adroit as to lead her safely and keep her from wandering out of the right key. In all these matters as she grew older she so vastly improved, that, in about ten years' time, dating from her first appearance in public at the Royalty, she could speak French fairly well, and could play and sing sufficiently for any small drawing-room purpose. She was always a rather handsome woman, lacking height. But as Venus in *Ixion*, by the aid of a magnificent wig of "golden hair hanging (far) down her back," and looped-up Greek drapery showing the better part of a shapely leg, she gained the reputation of being both a beauty and a classic model. She played with such earnestness and took everything so seriously (she was never a dancer, and only "walked through" her part as Venus in *Ixion*), that, on my being commissioned by Mrs. Selby to write a three-act comedy-drama for the company, I selected Ada Cavendish to represent a character then, as I believe, quite new to the modern stage, namely, that of a fashionable female swindler. This was long before *L'Aventurière*. The piece I wrote was entitled *Madame Berliot's Ball*, and was inspired by a situation in a play I had seen in Paris. Ada Cavendish quite fulfilled my expectations as to her dramatic capacity, and I have no sort of doubt that her success in this part opened to her the career in melodrama wherein she achieved a certain distinction. Her New Magdalen in Wilkie Collins' piece was a performance that "took the town."

Lydia Maitland was the very ideal of a pert soubrette. She

was not only pretty, but bright, sprightly, ready-witted, and very rarely in a bad temper. I forget her history—who she was and where she came from—but I remember she was well educated, spoke French well, had an excellent touch for the piano, played her own accompaniments, and sang with *verve*. As Apollo she was dashing, and, I believe, “a great attraction.” She could not have been more than two-and-twenty, if that, though I fancy she was older than Ada Cavendish. I selected her for the part of an impudent “Tiger” in *Madame Berliot’s Ball*, and in this character she was excellent. She remained at the Royalty during the Selby and Pelham *régime* (the fun she used to make of the manageresses behind their backs, and how demure she was when in their company!), and then she went into the provinces. The last time I saw her on the stage was when Alexander Henderson was manager and lessee of the Prince of Wales’s Theatre, Liverpool, and produced, in a style far more elaborate than the Royalty had been able to afford, my extravaganza *Snowdrop*, when Lydia Maitland played the part in which she had made so great a hit during the London run of the piece. She played another engagement at this theatre when my *Rumpelstiltskin* was produced. Subsequently I met her once, some years after, in Piccadilly, as she was stepping into her carriage. But how changed! Some part of her life had been a very merry one, and the happiest portion of it, I am sure, had been when, lively, gay, careless, without a thought of the morrow, she was playing at the Royalty Theatre.

Miss Rosina Wright, an experienced *danseuse*, was the ballet-mistress, and in *Ixion* danced a *pas seul* just to show her pupils how to do it. Personally I wished she had been out of it; but as a young author I had not the requisite *auctoritas* to insist on a ballet being cut down and a *pas seul* omitted. However, she was satisfied with this one dance; and Mrs. Selby, stout and elderly, who would not be omitted from the piece, in order that she might set an example, in acting and elocution, to her pupils, was propitiated by my giving her the part of Dia, Ixion’s Queen, who was a sort of dummy Lady Macbeth in the first scene, with only part of a chorus to sing; after which Mrs. Selby was lost to view until, in the third scene, she reappeared for a few moments as the Tragic Muse, to whom was given a telling speech *à propos* of dangerous tight-rope-walking exhibitions; this speech was originally written for Juno; but Juno, being only a pupil, and Mrs. Selby her instructress, it was considered that, for the benefit of the piece, this lengthy harangue should be delivered by the more experienced actress. So Mrs. Selby spoke it; and it was much cheered, though, to my thinking,

it considerably impeded the action of the scene. Juno—a fine, dark, handsome woman, Miss Blanche Ellister by name—did not object to the words being, so to speak, taken out of her mouth, for this young lady was not great histrionically, and I think it was not long before she married and quitted the stage.

There was a bright, intelligent girl, whom Mrs. Selby cast for Cupid. Her name was Marie Langford. She was not “a born actress,” but she did exactly what she was taught to do, with a natural grace that was charmingly fresh. She had the courage of her opinions as to her own dramatic capabilities. She could not sing, she could not even join in a chorus; but she was rather pretty, lively, could speak well, and was not troubled with nerves. She rather objected to the scantiness of Cupid’s costume, which, in these days of the least possible drapery, would be considered as over-clothing for a Cupid; but the skirts were lengthened a bit, showing, however, a pair of very shapely legs. Her one difficulty was to fix her wreath of roses so that it should not slip on one side and cause her to be mistaken for a youthful Bacchus. Her Cupid was a decided success; and having, with her property dart, wounded some susceptible swain, she married, left the stage, and, I trust, lived happily ever afterwards.

In 1864, with some changes in the company, we did *Snowdrop*, and the drama of *Madame Berliot’s Ball*, which I have already mentioned; and in ’65 I gave them *Pirithoüs, the Son of Ixion*, when the Misses Pelham, Ada Cavendish, Lydia Maitland, Fred Hughes, and Joe Robins were still in the company. Added to their number were Miss Clifford (replacing Mrs. Selby), and a novice, one Nelly Burton, of whom I recollect only that she was young, slight, and very pretty. Mr. W. H. Stephens, a thoroughly conscientious actor, had also become a member of the company. He was the companion villain to Ada Cavendish in *Madame Berliot’s Ball*, and, for a long time after this, he remained in London, playing at various theatres. He joined the majority some few years ago.

During the Pelham time, *Ixion*, *Snowdrop*, and *Rumpelstiltskin* were our three great successes at the Royalty; but the popularity of the last-mentioned at the Prince of Wales’s, Liverpool—where, as was the case with *Snowdrop*, it was so splendidly put on the stage, and so capitally played (I think that Lionel Brough, Edward Saker, and Lydia Thompson were in it, but am not sure) that it quite threw into the shade its success in London.

In 1866 Miss Oliver (“Patty Oliver”), having seceded from the Strand, where she had been one of that first-rate burlesque company which, consisting of such first-rate comedians as Miss Marie Wilton, Charlotte Saunders, “Jimmy Rogers,”



“Johnnie Clarke,” and James Bland, has, I venture to say, rarely been equalled and never excelled, undertook the management of the Royalty. I was appealed to for the second burlesque, Robert Reece having done the first, *The Lady of the Lake*. At so low an ebb were the finances that it would be impossible, so I was informed, for Miss Oliver to pay me anything like “a sum down.” There is an ancient theatrical proverb to the effect that “the manager’s difficulty is the author’s opportunity.” This was Mr. Dion Boucicault’s teaching, and, acting on it himself, he found the result eminently satisfactory. Happening to be staying with him at Brighton, and telling him of the state of affairs at the Royalty, he at once undertook to be my guide, philosopher, and friend, and showed me how a sharing system, after expenses, would be convenient for the manager and advantageous to the author. This struck me as a very good notion, and, by a lucky chance, I had already hit upon my subject for a burlesque; a subject, by the way, suggested to me by “Johnnie Dean,” then a well-known and highly-popular member of the Garrick Club, which had been refused (fortunately for me) by Mr. Shepherd (of “Shepherd and Creswick”), one of the lessees of the Surrey Theatre.

This subject was *Black-Eye’d Susan*. The nautical burlesque was then an absolute novelty, and for this particular *dramatis personæ* there could not have been found anywhere a more perfect company than that under the command of Miss Oliver at the Royalty. Patty herself was simply inimitable as the heroine. Fred Dewar, as Captain Crosstree, made the hit of his career, as did also Mr. Danvers in the character of the Dame, William’s mother. As to William himself, or herself, to whom so much of the “go” of the piece was due, I can only quote the words of John Oxenford, then the able critic of *The Times*: “But the conspicuous character of all is William, acted by Miss Rosina Ranoe with a dashing vivacity totally distinct from that which is generally displayed by the actresses of burlesque gentlemen. Miss Ranoe, though her costume is idealised by a substitution of satin for cloth, is not content to be one of those dapper little youngsters who have acquired such a wide popularity, but aims at a genial representation of the British Tar, as accepted by the admirers of nautical drama.” The piece was a gigantic success; it ran for I forget how many hundred nights; anyhow, over five hundred, which is good at any time, but was then something quite exceptional.

My work for the Royalty continued with more or less success as long as Patty Oliver had the little theatre in Dean Street, Soho, which had by this time “achieved greatness.” On her re-



tirement from the cares of management (when she next played Pretty Seeusan it was at the Opéra Comique, and I was *her* manager) the property had become a very valuable one, but no subsequent success on the Royalty stage ever, on the whole, equalled that of *Ixion* or of *Black-Eye'd Susan*, though as expenses had not increased in proportion to the rise in prices for admission (such as half-a-guinea instead of five shillings and seven-and-six for the stalls, and so forth) the returns for shorter runs were more satisfactory than ever they could have been in the old days. Subsequently big successes were rare, and the Royalty's seasons spasmodic. But my story, such as I have had to tell, "by request," ends with the last Patty Oliver season at the New Royalty Theatre.

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## THE IRVING INFLUENCE IN AMERICA.

BY STEPHEN FISKE.

THE influence upon the American stage of the visits of Irving Miss Terry, and the Lyceum company may be described as immediate and permanent, deep and widespread, physical and metaphysical. I do not mean that an Irving school of acting has been created. On the contrary, there have been no American imitators of Irving's acting, except in burlesques, and the caricatures of his voice and manner have not survived until his present tour. An English actor belonging to another London company imitated Irving, and the New York audience resented it and hissed him. The actor claimed that the imitation was unconscious; but he and his star suffered from it, and have not yet regained their popularity. As an actor, Irving's methods are so identified with his personality that they can never be copied effectively. As to Miss Terry, she is simply inimitable. It is as a manager rather than as an actor that Irving has exercised a tremendous influence.

There were kings before Agamemnon, and plays were put upon the stage sumptuously before Irving's time; but never before have they been produced in America so artistically. American managers have not lacked liberality. I remember a presentation of *King John* at the Bowery Theatre—our "Old Drury"—in my boyhood, when a platform was built around the dress circle to show off the processions. At Booth's theatre, over twenty years ago, Shakspeare's plays were presented with such elaborate scenery and machinery that the manager was temporarily ruined by the expenses. More recently, a rural character play, called *The Old Homestead*, that had run for hundreds of nights as a variety hall sketch, and hundreds of nights as a melodrama, was

brought out spectacularly, at the Academy of Music, with a cyclorama for the farm scenes, and a church built of real stones for the city scene, and more than renewed its former popularity. But until Irving came our stage managers knew comparatively nothing of the exquisite simplicity and the artistic completeness of his arrangements of scenery, properties, and supernumeraries.

As the curtain rises in an American theatre now, you see at once the influence of Irving; for the auditorium is darkened to throw up the picture on the stage. The American system was to keep the auditorium bright, so as to show off the house and the costumes of the ladies of the audience, as at the Italian opera. I think that Sir Henry darkens the front of the house too deeply. A theatre is, above all, a place of amusement, and the audience ought not to be left, like bad children, to amuse themselves in the dark. But the Lyceum idea is to obliterate the auditorium and concentrate attention upon the stage, and this plan is now adopted in all the leading theatres of America.

The light effects; the changing of the scenes in total darkness; the use of the lime and the electric lights to make the scenery prominent or obscure, as may be most appropriate to the action, and to show or to conceal facial expression—these were introduced in America by Irving, and are now imitated by all managers. The first performance of *The Bells*, when Irving made the ruddy firelight reveal his crime, and when the changing lights in the court scene half concealed, half disclosed, the judges and the mesmerist, as in the flickering vagaries of a dream, was a revelation to Americans. They saw that, while Irving was acting before the scenes, Henry J. Loveday and his assistants were acting behind the scenes, just as the old Ravel family assisted each other in pantomimes; and they learned for the first time what can be done with dramatic lights and shades to heighten the impressions of voice, gesture, and movement.

The management of supernumeraries was a hopeless task in America until the Irving visits. Every great actor had attempted it and failed. Edwin Forrest, the greatest of American tragedians, used to try to rouse his supers into something like real life by grossly insulting them *sotto voce*: and sometimes he had to fight with them, as at Albany, when the Roman populace were so angered by his taunts that they rushed upon him savagely, and he knocked one of them into the orchestra, and chased another up the painting room ladder before the play could proceed. Boucicault taught his crowds how to act, as in the court scenes of his Irish and Scotch dramas; but they forgot his lessons as soon as the Shakspeare of Ireland left the stage. In tragedy, melodrama, or spectacle, in the middle ages or the classic ages, or the any time

at all of fairyland, the supers marched on two by two, and ranged themselves in lines on each side of the stage, and marched off two by two, no matter what happened in their sight and hearing—a murder, a trial, a duel, an earthquake, or a miracle. Irving changed all that. When the soldiers in *Faust* came straggling across the scene in picturesque groups, the American managers nodded to each other and said, “Of course; that is the way the ancient warriors marched when not in battle.” The grouping in *Faust*, the searches in *Louis XI.*, and later the marches in *Macbeth*, further instructed them. They know now how to use supernumeraries as part of the picture, because Irving has taught them.

Music was never employed dramatically in America until Irving came. We had the theory of dramatic music, but it was ludicrously practised. There was the “hurry” in the orchestra for melodramas. When N. C. Goodman first went on the stage in a front scene this “hurry” frightened him so that he rushed off to his home, fell on his knees at his mother’s feet, and cried, “O, please get me a place in a shop; I cannot act!” Mostly the music was used to drown the noise of setting the scenes. Sometimes there were efforts to select music appropriate to the situation, as when Artemus Ward displayed his picture of the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, and the band played “Jordan is a Hard Road to Travel!” But the continuous music of the Irving plays, now suggesting the emotions of the situation, now intensifying the effects of the acting, now dominating the scene, now almost unheard in the excitement of the dramatic incident, was unknown. People said of Irving’s first productions, “Why, they are like grand opera!” Now the conductor of every theatre orchestra tries to be another Meredith Ball, and the audience listen to the musical accompaniments and appreciate them.

But these are instances of what may be termed the physical part of the Irving influence, and far above them I rank the metaphysical part. More than any other actor on the American stage, Sir Henry has given dignity and importance to theatrical art, and has taught the public to respect and value it. America had produced great actors and actresses before he came; some of them had noble ambitions beyond mere showmanship and money-making; but none of them ever succeeded in so impressing the public with the artistic sincerity and earnestness that elevate the art of making-believe into a profession. Forrest, the most typical of American actors, endeavoured to dignify the drama by offering large sums for American plays, and he even dreamed that an actor’s popularity might be utilised for political preferment. Had he lived until Irving’s time perhaps he would have anticipated



some of Irving's methods. Be this as it may, to Irving now belongs the credit of upholding acting as an artistic profession on and off the stage, by his lectures and speeches as well as by his dramatic productions, by his careful scholarship as well as by his admirable management. In this respect he stands unrivalled, and his superiority has never been even questioned.

I have known Irving since his London début, at the St. James's Theatre, in *The Two Lives of Mary Leigh*, long before all London knew him in *The Bells*, at the Lyceum, and when I met him, the other night, at the Lotos Club, after the successful production of his son's little fairy play, *A Christmas Story*, he seemed to me unchanged by the years that have intervened. Yet what changes those years have brought to the profession! Actors have risen from taverns to clubs; from clubs to drawing-rooms; from Bohemianism to the aristocracy; from mummers to artists. I do not say that Irving alone has wrought these changes; the time was ripe for them, and he proved to be the man for the time; but his influence has largely assisted them, and his conscientious devotion to art for art's sake has been the shining example that has led the whole profession onward and upward. This influence and example, powerful in England, where the loftiest traditions of the stage had been preserved unbroken from Garrick to Phelps, whom Irving legitimately succeeded, have been a thousand times more powerful in America, where we can boast no such kingly line, and where no native actor has as yet appeared to claim the dramatic laurels that fell from the dying head of Edwin Booth.

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## CONCERNING SHORT STORIES.

BY AN EX-EDITOR.

NOT many years back I was the editor of a small periodical devoted mainly to stage matters. As I take pleasure in examining the foibles of humanity from the superior standpoint of self, the post gave me many opportunities of broadening the range of my philosophical studies. In particular the *genus* amateur-novelettist interested me, and perhaps an account of some of its peculiarities may not be thought out of place here.

It was quite evident that a considerable section of the educated population of Great Britain considered themselves quite capable of writing a short story. It is saddening to think of the countless numbers of those whose fondest hopes were blighted—those hopes being, of course, the sight of their lucubrations in print. The utmost space I could allow for the usual story was sixteen hundred words. The average length of the specimens



submitted to me was three thousand words. In no case that I can recall did the number fall short of eighteen hundred.

Some utterly ignored the first principles that guide the editor of a dramatic journal in the selection of his stories—namely, that the plot should turn upon the doings of actors or actresses, or upon playgoers as such. The most frequent delinquents in this respect were the authors of sporting, stock-broking, and “up the river” stories. When, however, this principle was recognised, a long letter was usually sent explaining how thoroughly they realised the condition. They usually wound up by recording their appreciation of the necessity of all actors and actresses being thoroughly reputable persons in a story intended for publication in “your esteemed periodical” (it was surprising—no, in my character of philosopher, let me say curious—how often these amateur authors failed to grasp the fact). “Of course, I quite understand,” wrote a young gentleman with a west-end address, “that no story stands any chance of acceptance if it has for its central character an actress who gives suppers to gentlemen friends after the play, and who, if she has no carriage, travels first class on the Metropolitan and gets out at Marlborough Road or Swiss Cottage.” He then goes on to assure me that his story contains no such character, and that he is at present thinking out a rather good idea for another little “feuilleton.”

Then there was the lady novelettist who informed me, always in strict confidence, that the leading incident of her story, “however improbable it might seem” (the number of times that these words were underscored afforded a good index not only to the temperament but to the truthfulness of the writer), really happened to her brother or her cousin, who is “on the stage.” The story that accompanied this kind of letter was promptly returned unread. One gentleman had the effrontery and the egotism to say that he had noticed that for some time the quality of my stories had been steadily on the wane, and that an infusion of “new blood” could not but be beneficial. He begged to send me something from his own pen. I was often asked to give a title to a story, and once—only once—I was asked to choose one out of six submitted to me.

And now to leave the letters sent by these curious people for the plots of the stories themselves. A wonderful sameness pervaded them—a recognition of a lady on the stage by a gentleman in a private box, a leaning forward on his part to attract her attention, her recognition of him, and a consequent dizziness that would have sent her face forwards on to the very footlights had he not leapt on to the stage in the nick of time to

save her. Variations on this formed, at least, a third of the matter sent in to me. Some were of the *Peep Behind the Scenes* order—a dying child, husband, wife, or mother, and the unfortunate player having to leave to go to the theatre. These people always had to play comic parts when of the sterner sex, and to dance and look pleasant when of the weaker. Then there was the type of story containing an aristocratic parent who refuses to allow his offspring to marry a player. How indifferent must this kind of author have been to the signs of the times !

All stories that could not be classed with one of the three types mentioned above inevitably fell into this last category—the events of a play happening in real life to an actor or actress in that play. For instance, a “rising young actress” (they are always “rising,” seldom or never “risen”) has a sweetheart. On the morning of her appearance in a new part, she either sees an announcement in a society paper of her lover’s engagement to Lady Clara Vere de Vere, or the fickle swain comes himself to break it off with her. Of course she is in a passion of sobs until the evening comes. Then she dries her tears, determined that her cruel disappointment in the day shall not interfere with her acting in the evening. Curiously enough, the principal scene of the play is almost a replica of her own situation a few hours before. At the opening of the play she is nervous and restless, and feels that she is making but little impression on her audience. But as the play progresses she warms to her work. As the fateful scene draws near she feels herself rising to the situation. It comes and in a torrent of splendid invective she dismisses her faithless lover. Her success as an actress of the first rank is assured.

This sort of thing would have been very good did it not come too often. Week after week I had it pelted at me with a persistency that decided me more than anything else upon relinquishing a post where grey hairs, to say nothing of absolute lunacy, come more frequently than a modest sum upon which to live for the remainder of one’s days.

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## WHAT TO DO WITH THE DEADHEADS.

BY ALFRED PATERSON.

“ . . . . . let him not pass,  
But kill him rather.”

**I**N the present day the theatre and things theatrical are so much talked of and written about that it can hardly be necessary to explain that a “deadhead” is a member of the audience who has not paid to see the performance. The question of free admission to theatres is one that has occupied the minds

of acting-managers for generations past, and is likely to do so for generations to come. To "paper a house" well is a fine art, which, like every other art, requires both natural aptitude and experience to acquire it to perfection. Opinions differ as to the expediency of letting anyone—with, perhaps, the exception of the Press—into a theatre free; and there are people who are even opposed to making this exception. But, upon the whole, I feel sure that there is very little chance of managers ceasing to extend the customary courtesy to journalists; for not only authors and actors, but the public also, like to see notices of performances in the newspapers, especially when such are known to be written by competent critics, as is the case with the leading papers. It is, of course, to the recognised critics only that this courtesy should be shown, and not to anyone who, with or without justification, may put the name of some paper upon his address card in order that such free admission may be granted to him.

I am strongly of opinion that there is a great deal too much passing-in at theatres; and I know there are very many persons who think they have a right to free passes who surely have no more right to ask to see a performance without paying than they have to ask their baker to supply them with bread, or their boot-maker with boots, without charge; and these persons are frequently just the ones who would be most shocked at the idea of their children being educated at a charity school. How, then, is it that they do not mind begging for the charity of a free entertainment? But, while I think the "paper" system is greatly abused, I do not think it would be possible, or, if possible, wise, in all cases to do away entirely with a free list. I cannot imagine anything to be more dispiriting to the performers than having to play to a nearly empty house. It is to obviate this that the acting-manager *invites* certain ladies and gentlemen to witness the entertainment. If, in his wisdom, or from friendship, a manager asks certain people to a performance at his theatre, no one has the slightest right to complain. A competent man will use great discretion in issuing his invitations. It is the uninvited guest that is so great a trouble to him. Many people, because they know someone connected with a theatre, or even because they know someone who knows someone else connected with a theatre, appear to be of the opinion that they have not only a perfect right to ask for free admission, but, further, that they are badly treated by the acting-manager if he does not accord it to them. It would be much wiser to close the house than to fill it with an audience composed of such persons, for, however generously they may be treated, they are sure to find something to grumble about.



The *matinée* performances of new plays are field-days for the "deadheads." The dramatic critics are present from necessity—seldom from choice—but they form but a very small part of the great non-paying audience present. Of course, in the most exceptional circumstances only would it be possible on these occasions to fill a theatre with a legitimate paying audience; therefore, it is the duty of the manager to see that the theatre is properly filled with those whose presence is likely to help towards the success of the performance. Anyone who has been present at many of these functions knows that the stalls and dress-circle are usually crammed with people who come uninvited, and who certainly don't pay—consisting, for the most part, of actors and actresses, more or less known or unknown. Whether or not an audience so composed is likely to be of much use in helping the author to get his play accepted by a responsible manager is a question that I have no intention of discussing here; but it seems to me that, having got your audience of "deadheads," it is only reasonable and right that you should use them in the best way you can for the good of the theatrical profession, whether you are able or not to get much good out of them for the purpose of your production.

Having very briefly stated some of my views upon the question of free admission to theatres, I now come to the object I have in writing this article, namely, "what to do with the deadheads." I would venture to suggest to managers the idea of their taking a leaf out of the books of the churches and chapels, and making a collection for a charity. I do not propose handing round the plate or more fashionable collecting-bag, but, when free passes are given to those requesting them, that they should be asked to give something towards the funds of the Actors' Benevolent Fund—which is a most deserving charity. Why not invite those ladies and gentlemen who ask for free seats to give something, however little, for the good of this or a similar institution? Few, or none, could object to do so, and then at least some good to the theatrical profession would be done by their presence at the performance. The mere fact of it costing something, however small an amount, to be present at a performance is likely to make one pay more attention to the play than would be the case if one got in entirely free; and thus good would be done to those who produced the piece as well as to the institution for which the collection was made. Of course, there are various kinds of "deadheads," but those who came uninvited could, with common decency, hardly object to what I have proposed. Something of the kind has, I believe, been tried in America, with beneficial results—and if there, why not in England? Someone will, I



trust, shortly try the experiment at a London *matinée*. However little good it might do, I cannot see how it could do any harm, and I firmly believe, if it became the recognised custom, the results would be most satisfactory. Charity, like the quality of mercy, is twice blessed—it blesses him that gives and him that takes. One well-known manager of great experience in the production of plays has told me how very pleased he would be to see my suggestion carried out. The reason why I have proposed that the collections should be made for theatrical charities instead of hospitals and other more generally useful institutions is not that I see any particular reason why these latter should not benefit by the proposal but because the former seem to be specially appropriate to the occasion.

“Freely ye have received, freely give.”

## PANTOMIME IN THE UNITED STATES.

BY W. J. LAWRENCE.

AMERICAN Pantomime is dead, its life-blood drained by that vampire, Farce Comedy. Doubtless it was easy prey, for despite (perhaps because of) its distinctiveness it was sadly lacking in the elements of longevity. It might have acquired tenacity had it been given the *droit annuel de cité*—to borrow the phrase used by our contemptuous French neighbours in dealing with our own yearly outburst of clownery and pantaloony. But the American playgoer never permitted the native article to assume a Christmassy flavour, and showered condign punishment on the heads of those who attempted to popularise that parochial entertainment of the flashy *revue* order so beloved of the Britisher. If therefore genuine Transatlantic Pantomime only enjoyed a brief existence of about a quarter of a century, still from first to last it *was* Pantomime, in the unvitiated sense of the term, and boasts a record of very considerable interest.

The late Mr. E. L. Blanchard, one of the most punctilious as well as the most genial of historians, was guilty in his day of a singular error. He was wont to maintain that the first English Pantomime ever seen in America was the famous Grimaldian entertainment of *Mother Goose*, which, as performed at the Bowery Theatre, New York, with E. J. Parsloe as clown, in February, 1832, proved a shocking fiasco. Considering Mr. Blanchard's absorbing interest in pantomime history, it is surprising that he should have overlooked the fact that two such famous productions as Garrick's *Harlequin's Invasion*, and Sheridan's *Robinson Crusoe*, had been performed at the John-

street Theatre, New York, in 1786. But if not the first English pantomime in America, *Mother Goose* was at least an epoch-making piece. Notwithstanding its early failure, it bore frequent revival for thirty years afterwards, and finally imposed its form, in the sixties, upon the native school of pantomime. Down to quite recently, indeed, American productions of this class consisted of a short semi-pastoral "opening," performed almost entirely in dumb show, and a long trick harlequinade. The year in which *Mother Goose* was first produced in New York saw the advent there of the Ravels, a clever troupe of French mimes and rope dancers, who brought in their train the traditions of the celebrated Théâtre des Funambules, and by dint of their long-extended popularity succeeded in grafting French methods upon English forms, thus paving the way for an American school of pantomime. It was the gifted George Lafayette Fox, the Debureau rather than the Grimaldi of the United States, who, thanks to the hint thus afforded him, reconciled the riotous, full-blooded comicalities of John Bull with the subtle *diablerie* of Johnny Crapaud, and, by an adroit fusion of the well-worn stage tricks of the Old World, evolved the humour of the New.

Born in Boston, Mass., in 1825, Fox came of a theatrical family, and trod the stage from his childhood. Possessing pronounced ability as a low comedian, he soon found his way to New York, where he held his own in popularity with such artists as Burke and Joseph Jefferson. While enjoying great vogue at the Old National Theatre, early in the 'fifties, he became smitten with a taste for ballet-pantomime, and succeeded in persuading the manager to produce several Ravelesque pieces, such as *The Red Gnome* and *The Schoolmaster*, to gratify his hankerings. The venture proved in every way happy for the theatre. Luckily for himself, Fox had never received the primary training necessary for an acrobat, and in his miming was forced to rely upon his superabundant flow of quiet humour, which had for sluice-gate a marvellously expressive face. Perhaps the crowning feature was the nose, which seemed to have wandered there by mistake, and to have been fashioned for an altogether different type of man. In a woe-begone style it impressed upon you a sense of utter isolation, and of itself, in pantomimic pieces, spoke volumes of comic eloquence. Although best remembered now as America's representative clown, Fox was a variously gifted man of remarkably plastic temperament. Even at a time when some degree of versatility was expected of an actor, his range went far beyond that of any of his contemporaries. Acceptable as a character comedian either in Yankee or Irish parts, a sound melodramatic

actor and a mimic who, in burlesque, could reproduce the mannerisms of all the Hamlets of his day, he was also an artist in Shakspeare, and ranked among the few Transatlantic Bottoms who satisfied the fastidious.

The true American pantomime may be said to date from Fox's occupation as manager of the Bowery Theatre, about the year 1862. The distinctiveness of the school was shown in the make-up of the clown, who had the whitened face and bald pate of Pierrot combined with a dress similar in cut and colour to the orthodox Grimaldian Joey. Fox's crowning success, produced at the Olympic Theatre in 1868, was *Humpty Dumpty*, an elastic entertainment, capable of as many mutations, and enjoying as long a life as *La Biche au Bois*, or the *Pied de Mouton*. Achieving an initial run of 483 nights, it held its place in the bills there, on and off, until 1873, and was performed no fewer than 943 times at this one theatre, not to speak of representations at other houses and in other towns. Little wonder that the agnomen of "Humpty Dumpty" stuck to Fox to the day of his death, and that the name of the piece fastened itself in the public mind as a synonym for Pantomime! And thereby hangs a tale. For such, indeed, was the impress put upon *Humpty Dumpty* by its creator's genius, that very rarely has any pantomime produced since throughout the length and breadth of America been known by any other title. Poor G. L. Fox's taking off was as sad in its way as Joey Grimaldi's. He died of softening of the brain, in straitened circumstances, at Cambridge, Mass., on October 24, 1877.

Paramount among the elements contributing to the decline and fall of American Pantomime has been a woeful dearth of really funny clowns. Next in order, perhaps, to Fox came his quondam associate, Tony Denier, a pupil of the Ravels, who had that valuable Grimaldian gift denied to the great "Humpty Dumpty"—the faculty of inventing and manufacturing complicated harlequinade tricks. Descendant in the right line of some of the bluest blood in France (with a family tree bearing among other fruit a not unremote Ambassador to the Court of Spain), Mr. Denier landed at Boston in 1852 with the proverbial half-crown, and experienced much hardship before arriving at fame and fortune. In his time a man of many parts, his most extraordinary one was undoubtedly that bestowed upon him by Barnum in 1863. Donato, the famous one-legged dancer, had just taken London by storm, and the great showman wished to bring him to America. Donato's agent asked 500 dollars a week; Barnum offered fifty. "Are you aware, sir?" said the middleman, "that it took Donato four years to learn to dance?" "I don't know about that," replied Barnum, "but I've got a man who can do it in four weeks."



And in less than that time the public were once more gulled by the Prince of Humbugs, who gravely announced, "Tony Denier, the great American one-legged dancer." For fully a score of years from September, 1868, when he first plunged into management, Mr. Denier kept the torch of Pantomime alight by methodically touring the States as the leading light of his own "Humpty Dumpty" company. With his retirement into private life, to enjoy prosperous ease at Chicago, American Pantomime may be said to have ceased to be.

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MRS. STIRLING.

BY ARTHUR ESCOTT.

**C**ALLING some years ago at a dull-looking house in Duchess-street—the house occupied in succession by Charles Young and the elder Farren—I found myself, not for the first time, in the presence of as delightful an old lady as anyone could imagine. It was Mrs. Stirling, long one of the most distinctive figures in comedy on the English stage. Delightful she always was, with her finely-cut features, her merry eyes, her rich voice, her captivating smile, her joyous yet high-bred manner, her unfailing store of anecdote and reminiscence. I could have passed many and many a valuable hour in listening to her. Now and then, as she dwelt upon incidents in her long career, a tinge of sadness seemed to come over her. Perhaps she was thinking of her ill-starred marriage to the famous stage-manager at Drury Lane, Edward Stirling, who did not treat her well, and from whom, before long, she elected to live apart. He died in the summer of 1894; and in less than four months, at the age of seventy-eight, his by no means disconsolate widow married Sir Charles Hutton Gregory, the civil engineer, her junior by about one year only. We now have to regret her own death, which occurred at the end of last year.

On the occasion of the call I have mentioned, Mrs. Stirling, with a cheery "let us have a chat," gave me more than an outline of the story of her life. She was one of a numerous family brought into existence by a poor half-pay naval officer, by name Hehl. Unless my memory deceives me, she received her education at a French convent. In her sixteenth year, having no reason to doubt how straitened her father's circumstances were, she suddenly resolved to go on the stage. Without any preliminary teaching for it, but pretty, intelligent, and well read, she applied for employment to the manager of the Coburg Theatre, who, rather amused at her audacity, at once gave her a small part. Presently she was acting in the provinces, nearly always



with acceptance, of whatever sort the piece in the bill might be. As Rosalind, it appears, she soon achieved a rather marked success. Like most provincial players, Miss Clifton, as she called herself, had to undergo many hardships. One night, in bitter weather, she arrived at Liverpool on the coach, failed to obtain a lodging, and cried herself to sleep in the theatre on a box that contained the whole of her wardrobe. Early in 1836, in her twentieth year, she appeared at the Adelphi, then under the management of Frederick Yates, as Biddy Nutts in *A Dream at Sea*. The audience immediately took to the new actress, now Mrs. Stirling. "Without becoming too prolix by going into particulars," wrote one critic, "we may safely assert that she possesses in an eminent degree every requisite for a low comedy performer; that she does all with admirable tact and discretion, and that she is withal a very pretty woman."

But to shine in low comedy or melodrama was not enough for Mrs. Stirling. She aspired to brilliant comedy, to such a position as was held by Mrs. Nisbett. From the Adelphi she went over to Drury Lane, there to play Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing* and the chief part in *A Night in the Bastille*, and thence to the St. James's, there to give life to the burletta called *Love and Charity*. In 1841, at the Haymarket, she succeeded Miss Helen Faucit as Clara Douglas and Mrs. Glover as Lady Franklin, in *Money*. Next came an engagement under Macready at Drury Lane, during which she played Celia in *As You Like It*, Sophia in *The Road to Ruin*, and Mrs. Foresight in *Love for Love*. Unreasonably enough, she was angry that in *As You Like It* she had not been cast for Rosalind. Bouncing into the manager's room, she threw down her part on the table. Macready good-naturedly contrived to smooth matters, and the young actress had good cause to be glad that he succeeded. Probably he would have put up with even greater refractoriness on the part of the high-spirited young lady. "Much pleased," he wrote in his diary of a performance of *Money*, "with Mrs. Stirling, in Clara; she speaks with freshness and truth of tone." Soon afterwards she was associated with Charles Mathews in his farce of *The Eton Boy*. In 1845, at the Princess's Theatre, she acted with Macready, Charles Mathews, Wallack, Compton, and Charlotte Cushman, supporting the first as Cordelia in *Lear*, and as Madeline Weir in *The King and the Commons*. After a brief engagement at the Olympic, with Cousin Cherry in the farce of that name as her strongest card, she passed over to the Strand, and before long made herself famous as Adrienne Lecouvreur in *The Reigning Favourite*, as Iolanthe in *King René's Daughter*, and as Olivia in *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

Returning to the Olympic, she sustained the principal parts in *My Wife's Daughter*, *All That Glitters Is Not Gold*, and *Sir Roger de Coverley*.

It was in 1852, at the Haymarket, that Mrs. Stirling appeared in the character with which her name will always be identified. I refer, of course, to Peg Woffington in *Masks and Faces*. Fine as Webster's Triplet may have been, it was mainly to the actress, as *The Times* lately remarked, that the play owed its great success. Her Peg is now looked back upon as one of the most memorable theatrical achievements of the century. In the words of a contemporary critic, the part was a delightful compound of grace, wit, spirit, and nobleness of nature; and Mrs. Stirling was entitled to the enviable praise of having realised it to the full. Her Adrienne Lecouvreur had reached, or all but reached, the level of tragedy; in *Masks and Faces* she proved herself to be a mistress of the best sort of comedy art. "Stepping gracefully from seriousness to gaiety, and equally natural in both, Mrs. Stirling," wrote Oxenford, "is completely in her element." Yet once more at the Olympic, she impersonated a large variety of characters in the course of four or five years, including Marie de Fontanges in *Plot and Passion*, Mrs. Trotter Southdown in *To Oblige Benson*, Lady Teazle, Mrs. Bracegirdle in *The Tragedy Queen*, Mrs. Dorillon in *Wives as They Were and Maids as They Are*, Mrs. Levenson in *Leading Strings*, and Madame Bergmann in *The Red Vial*. Her Marie de Fontanges was marked by a display of emotional power in striking contrast to the archness and vivacity of her Peg Woffington. Alfred Wigan was the De Neuville, Emery the Fouché, Robson the Desmarests. At the Lyceum she was the original representative of Anne Carew in *A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing*; and another character which became vivid in her hands—why, by the way, does not Mrs. Bancroft play it?—was that of the too-devoted mother in *Hen and Chickens*.

From about 1860, though still in full possession of her natural and acquired gifts, Mrs. Stirling lived in comparative retirement. Fortune, on the whole, had been kind to her; the day-dreams of her early life were realised, and she had a mind to enjoy her *otium cum dignitate*. In course of time, being too active-minded for absolute repose, she provided herself with an occupation by giving instruction in elocution to clergymen, barristers, players, members of Parliament, and others who had to make their voices heard in public. For many years it was her custom to reply to the toast of the evening at the dinner in aid of the Dramatic and Musical Sick Fund, which must have profited to a large extent by her exertions. Nearly all of the speeches she made were written for

her by Tom Taylor (a fact hitherto known only to a few) ; and the MS. of one, delivered in 1874, when Mr. Oxenford took the chair, was presented to me by herself. By this time she seemed to have definitely withdrawn from the stage, but in 1879 she was induced by Miss Litton to play in *She Stoops to Conquer* and *The Beaux' Stratagem* at the Imperial Theatre. Three years afterwards she figured as the Nurse in Mr. Irving's revival of *Romeo and Juliet*, and contributed largely to the effect it produced. On the last night of the run, Miss Ellen Terry, after tearfully embracing her, slipped on her finger a diamond ring, while her no less appreciative manager placed on her wrist a bracelet of pearls. Mr. Bancroft attracted her to the Haymarket, where she appeared as the Marquise in *Caste*, the Countess of Caryl in *Lords and Commons*, and Mrs. Malaprop in *The Rivals*. It may be doubted whether the first and last of these parts have ever had so fitting a representative. On the closing night of the Bancroft management she resumed her old part of Lady Franklin in *Money*. "Though terribly ailing," Mrs. Bancroft tells us, "the moment her cue came to go on the stage she seemed to become twenty years younger ; vigour returned to her limbs, and she walked with such a firm and stately gait that the change was extraordinary." In 1885 she was the Martha in Mr. Irving's superb production of *Faust*. Possibly she may have been too old to look the part, but any disadvantage in this way was atoned for by her keen appreciation of character, incident, and situation. Her health now gave way ; and at the end of the Lyceum season of 1885-6, with a roar of applause ringing in her ears, she unconsciously took a final farewell of the stage after about fifty-seven years' service thereon. Thackeray, writing over the signature of "Theates" in the *Examiner* half a century ago, bears testimony to the fineness of her style, "which, easy and natural as if she were talking in a room, and though ranging at will through every variety of feeling and expression, yet passes so gracefully from change to change that the sense of rhythm is never lost, always musical, never monotonous." In a word, she was a truly great actress, especially in brilliant comedy ; and with her, as far as we can judge at present, we must part company with Peg Woffington, Marie de Fontanges, and not a few other vivid dramatic creations.



## Portraits.

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### MISS LENA ASHWELL.

SAVE for her appearance as Elaine in *King Arthur*, there is little to be recorded of the brief artistic career of Miss Lena Ashwell to distinguish it from those of the majority of young actresses who are seen to possess decided talent, and whose gradual advance in their art is watched with interest. The period of training must be gone through, and in nearly all cases the training is on much the same lines—the only lines that experience shows to be useful. Before she took to the stage in 1891, Miss Ashwell had studied at the Royal Academy of Music, though, with the exception of *The Piper of Hamelin*, in which she made a charming Liza, she has not turned her voice or her musical training to account by playing in musical pieces. Her earliest experience was naturally gained in small parts at London theatres and with touring companies. Mr. Alexander, always ready to aid promising beginners, engaged her for one of his *Lady Windermere's Fan* tours, while she appeared at the Globe in *Gloriana*, and at the Opéra Comique in *Man and the Woman*, the unfortunate enterprise of the late Mr. Arthur Dacre and Miss Amy Roselle. Then came a course of under-studying at the Comedy, *Sowing the Wind* the piece and Miss Winifred Emery the principal. After this Miss Ashwell appeared in several productions at this theatre, leaving it eventually to play in the revived *Marriage* at the Court. The offer of Elaine at the Lyceum was eagerly accepted, and the choice made by Sir Henry Irving was fully justified. Miss Ashwell's appearance and her sympathetic acting won deservedly high praise, and the slight, girlish figure will long remain in the memories of playgoers as an ideal embodiment of the poet's graceful and beautiful conception. It is evident that Miss Ashwell's gifts lie in the direction of the romantic quite as much as the drawing-room drama, and in these days such qualities as she has shown herself to possess ought not to be lost sight of. When the romantic revival, of which so much talk is in the air, comes about (and until it is actually here we shall regretfully refuse credence to all rumours as to its being on the way), Miss Ashwell ought quickly to be in the front. For her sake, as well as our own, we hope it may not be much longer delayed. Miss Ashwell, who is, by the way, the daughter of a naval officer, is married to Mr. Arthur Playfair, the clever actor, son of Major-General Playfair.



"THE THEATRE," FEBRUARY, 1896.



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MISS LENA ASHWELL.



## At the Play.

### IN LONDON.

THE public would appear to have returned to its old allegiance, and, in consequence, the theatres are enjoying an exceptional period of prosperity. The present outlook is distinctly gratifying, and holds out every promise that no changes of any importance may be expected for some time to come.

### THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

A Play, in Four Acts, by WILSON BARRETT. Produced at the Lyric Theatre, January 4.

Marcus .. ..	Mr. WILSON BARRETT.	Ancaria .. ..	Miss ALIDA CORTELYON.
Nero .. ..	Mr. FRANKLYN MCLEAY.	Daones .. ..	Miss LAURA JOHNSON.
Tigellinus ..	Mr. CHARLES HUDSON.	Julia.. ..	Miss CECILIA WILMAN.
Licinius ..	Mr. EDWARD IRWIN.	Cyrene .. ..	Miss GERTIE BOSWELL.
Glabrio ..	Mr. AMBROSE MANNING.	Edoni .. ..	Miss ALICE GAMBIER.
Philodemus ..	Mr. T. W. PERCYVAL.	Zona .. ..	Miss BESSIE ELMA.
Metullus ..	Mr. G. BERNAGE.	Catia .. ..	Miss M. SHATTINGER.
Signinus ..	Mr. D. MCCARTHY.	Mytelene ..	Miss ROSE PENDENNIS.
Servilius ..	Mr. HORACE HODGES.	Favius .. ..	Mr. ALFRED BRYDONE.
Strabo .. ..	Mr. MARCUS ST. JOHN.	Titus.. ..	Mr. STAFFORD SMITH.
Viturius ..	Mr. C. DERWOOD.	Melos .. ..	Mr. PERCY FOSTER.
Berenis ..	Miss MAUD HOFFMAN.	Stephanus ..	Miss HAIDEE WRIGHT.
Dacia .. ..	Miss DAISY BELMORE.	Mercia .. ..	Miss MAUD JEFFRIES.
Poppea .. ..	Miss GRACE WARNER.		

The reports which from time to time reached London concerning the excitement created in America and the English provinces by Mr. Wilson Barrett's play, *The Sign of the Cross*, were certainly not calculated to allay public curiosity respecting its first performance here. In point of fact, a scene of such enthusiasm as that which greeted the production of the new drama at the Lyric is not often witnessed. In part, perhaps, this may be explained by the great personal influence exercised by Mr. Barrett himself—an influence, be it said, that even his long absence from London has proved powerless to diminish in the slightest degree. One remembers with a keen thrill of pleasure and of gratitude his early days at the Princess's, and the plucky fashion in which he there upheld the banner of the legitimate drama. Nor is it possible wholly to forget the period of his reverses and the courageous manner in which they were faced. That a fresh turn of fortune's wheel should again have brought him luck is an event at which all must rejoice. And, happily, there can be no uncertainty touching the instantaneous and complete success achieved by *The Sign of the Cross*. As the popular voice is thus clearly on Mr. Barrett's side, we feel at greater liberty to say that, while we recognise in the new drama

many excellent and even exalted qualities, we are unable to endorse the high encomiums which it has elicited, especially from clergymen of various persuasions. For it is precisely in its ethical aspect that we consider the play falls short, or at least fails to attain the height which it might reasonably have been expected to do. The piece has been praised as a vivid illustration of the struggle between Paganism and Christianity, between the material and the spiritual, and of the irresistible ascendancy, in face of trial and tribulation, of the latter. But inasmuch as it merely offers a presentment of outward things, inasmuch as it neglects to show the inner workings of a storm-beaten soul striving to force its way from darkness into light, inasmuch as it substitutes a simple *coup de théâtre* for a process of rationalisation, or perhaps it would be more proper to say of emotional growth, we are constrained to assign the play a much lower position than we might have done had it proved as satisfying in treatment as in conception.

*The Sign of the Cross* embodies the story of the love, or rather passion, awakened by a Christian maiden, Mercia, in the heart of Marcus Superbus, one of Nero's prefects. Persuaded by Tigellinus, his favourite counsellor, that the Christians are responsible for the growing hatred of the Roman populace towards their Emperor, Nero orders that the girl, along with many of her co-believers, shall be imprisoned and held ready for the arena. In the midst of one of his saturnalias Marcus has Mercia brought to his house, where she is insulted and contemned by his guests. Dismissing these, Marcus, a prey to overwhelming passion, attempts to take her in his arms, but, repulsing him, Mercia raises a cross on high—an act which suffices to confound and terrify him. Presently Mercia and her companions are discovered within a dungeon adjoining the arena, to which they are speedily to be led, for, despite a vehement appeal made by Marcus, Nero, prompted by the Empress Poppea, has refused to reverse his decision. Half maddened by the thought of losing her, Marcus hastens to Mercia, offers if she will consent to deny her religion to make her his wife, and finally, on finding entreaty and argument alike futile, states his determination to die with, rather than live without, her. Mercia accepts this as sufficient proof of her lover's conversion to the new religion, and together they pass into the arena. But by the unbiassed observer, the conclusion, as evidence of the power of Christianity, will certainly be pronounced both impotent and unconvincing, despite the fact that it has been received with the greatest enthusiasm by innumerable clergymen, a famous Dean, and at least one Bishop.

To the general performance, as to the mounting of the piece,



great praise is due. Mr. Barrett's earnest and virile style was eminently well suited to the part of Marcus, although he has still to rid himself of certain faults of intonation. Mr. Franklyn McLeay furnished a fine study of the prematurely decrepit Emperor, and Mr. Charles Hudson an admirable study of the wily Tigellinus. The *Poppea* of Miss Grace Warner, if erring a little on the side of placidity, was a careful and clever performance, while Miss Maud Jeffries, although in some measure incapacitated by hoarseness, played with genuine tenderness and emotion as Mercia. The real acting success of the evening fell, however, to Miss Haidee Wright, whose representation of the boy Stephanus fairly electrified the audience by its extraordinary force, reality, and intensity.

### THE PRISONER OF ZENDA.

A Romance Play, in a Prologue and Four Acts, adapted from ANTHONY HOPE'S story by EDWARD ROSE. Produced at the St. James's Theatre, January 7.

#### Characters of the Prologue.

Prince Rudolf ..	Mr. GEORGE ALEXANDER.	Jeffreys .. ..	Mr. HENRY BOYCE.
Duke Wolfgang ..	Mr. HERBERT WARINO.	Giffen .. ..	Mr. F. FEATHERSTONE.
Gilbert, Earl of Rassendyll ..	Mr. CHARLES GLENNEY.	Amelia, Countess of Rassendyll ..	Miss MABEL HACKNEY.
Horace Glyn ..	Mr. VINCENT STERNROYD.		

#### Characters of the Play.

Rudolf the Fifth } ..	Mr. GEORGE ALEXANDER.	Lorenz Teppich ..	Mr. F. LOMNITZ.
Rudolf Rassendyll } ..		Franz Teppich ..	Mr. GEORGE P. HAWTREY.
Michael, Duke of Strelsau .. ..	Mr. HERBERT WARINO.	Lord Topham ..	Mr. GEORGE BANCROFT.
Colonel Sapt .. ..	Mr. W. H. VERNON.	Ludwig .. ..	Mr. I. DAWSON.
Fritz von Tarlenheim ..	Mr. ARTHUR ROYSTON.	Toni .. ..	Mr. ROBERT LORAINÉ.
Captain Hentzau ..	Mr. LAURENCE CAUTLEY.	Josef .. ..	Mr. FRANK DYALL.
Detchard .. ..	Mr. WILLIAM H. DAY.	Princess Flavia ..	Miss EVELYN MILLARD.
Bertram Bertrand ..	Mr. ALLAN AYNESWORTH.	Antoinette de Mauban .. ..	Miss LILY HANBURY.
Marshal Strakencz ..	Mr. HENRY LORAINÉ.	Frau Teppich ..	Miss OLGA BRANDON.

The difficulty, we might almost say the impossibility, of extracting a really good and satisfactory play from any novel, however dramatic in appearance, has long been recognised. It would be idle to contend that Mr. Rose has succeeded where so many have failed before him, for, to speak frankly, *The Prisoner of Zenda* is not a good play. That it contains certain elements calculated to make a popular success we cheerfully admit, however. Like Mercutio's wound, it will serve, and that, after all, in the eyes of an unambitious manager, is perhaps a greater recommendation than if the work were a masterpiece doomed to public neglect. But Mr. George Alexander is not an unambitious manager. His own record establishes a standard by which he himself must be judged. From this standpoint it is impossible to receive his latest production with anything resembling enthusiasm. As a stage-work *The Prisoner of Zenda* is indifferently constructed, ill-proportioned, and not too brilliantly written. It lacks the crowning virtue of cohesion, and partakes

more or less of the character of a mosaic. Much of the peculiar charm of the novel has disappeared, while the spirit of fantasy which pervaded the entire book is only occasionally to be found in the play. Mr. Rose has committed the initial error of supplying a prologue, by no means a bad piece of workmanship of its kind, but for all practical purposes unnecessary, and wholly out of keeping with the sentiment of what follows. In the first two acts of the drama the action is diffuse and sluggish, while the last two are so frankly melodramatic that the spectator is almost tempted to fancy he has strayed into the *Adelphi* by mistake. The popularity of the book, coupled with the charm of a sumptuous spectacle and an attractive performance, will doubtless, however, obtain for the piece a success which its intrinsic merits would scarcely justify. In his prologue Mr. Rose relates the story of the Countess of Rassendyll's intrigue with Prince Rudolf, heir-apparent to the throne of Ruritania, of her husband's unexpected return, and of the duel, which results in the wounding of the Prince at the moment when his father's death secures him the kingdom. When the curtain again rises, more than a century and a half has elapsed, and Rudolf Rassendyll, the Countess's lineal descendant, is found wandering in the forest near Zenda, in company with his friend, Bertram Bertrand. Meanwhile Black Michael, the King's cousin, has contrived to have him drugged, with the object of preventing his attending the coronation ceremonial. Struck by the resemblance between the young English stranger and the King, Colonel Sapt, one of his majesty's most devoted followers, prevails upon Rassendyll to take his royal master's place, and allow himself to be crowned instead. Rassendyll consents, and during the festivities meets and becomes enamoured of the charming Princess Flavia. By the treachery of Madame de Mauban, Black Michael, who himself covets the throne, is informed of the trick practised upon the public, and learns at the same instant that the real King has been conveyed to a dungeon in Michael's Castle of Zenda. Opposite it lies the Castle of Tarlenheim, whither Rassendyll and Sapt repair in the hope of rescuing the royal prisoner. Thanks to the treachery of Madame de Mauban, who has been made the object of Black Michael's perfidy, the two are enabled to break into Zenda, and, after a furious struggle, to save the King from his perilous position. Rassendyll, meanwhile, has confessed all to the Princess, and although loving each other passionately, they recognise that duty demands their separation, Flavia emphasising the fact by the words which bring the piece to a conclusion: "My King can do no wrong." As a whole *The Prisoner of Zenda* cannot be said to offer any great acting opportunities, although,

as if to make up for the deficiency, the performers on the first night evinced a not altogether laudable ambition to out-shout each other in the melodramatic passages. Mr. George Alexander's assumption of the triple part was at least marked by a considerable display of vigour as well as humour. Mr. Herbert Waring gave an exceedingly forcible and carefully-studied sketch of Black Michael, but decidedly the best performance of the evening was Mr. W. H. Vernon's finely-conceived portrait of the bluff old soldier, Colonel Sapt. Miss Evelyn Millard invested with considerable charm and emotional power the somewhat slight part of the Princess Flavia, while Miss Lily Hanbury made a stately Madame de Mauban. Mr. Alexander has mounted the piece in the most liberal way, the coronation scene in the Winter Palace at Strelsau being particularly striking. A word of praise ought in fairness to be given also to Mr. Walter Slaughter for his charming incidental music.

### MICHAEL AND HIS LOST ANGEL.

A Play, in Five Acts, by HENRY ARTHUR JONES. Produced at the Lyceum Theatre, January 15.	
The Reverend Michael Feversham . . . .	Mr. FORBES ROBERTSON.
Sir Lyolf Feversham . . . .	Mr. M. HATHORN.
Edward Lashmar (Father Hilary) . . . .	Mr. IAN ROBERTSON.
Andrew Gibbard . . . .	Mr. W. MACKINTOSH.
The Reverend Mark Docwray . . . .	Mr. JOSEPH CARNE.
Withycombe . . . .	Mr. JOHN WILLES.
Organist . . . .	Mr. J. S. CRAWLEY.
Organ Boy . . . .	Master MILLER.
Audrie Lesden . . . .	Miss MARION TERRY.
Rose Gibbard . . . .	Miss SARAH BROOKE.
Mrs. Cantelo . . . .	Miss HENRIETTA WATSON.
Fanny Clover . . . .	Mrs. E. H. BROOKE.
An Anglican Sister . . . .	Miss JAY LUPTON.

Mr. Henry Arthur Jones's latest play is hardly likely to add to the reputation of that prolific author. The statement will probably surprise no one more than himself, for *Michael and His Lost Angel* is only too evidently the outcome of much serious thought and an earnest purpose. But accomplishment, unfortunately, is not always to be measured by intention; and Mr. Jones's last effort merely furnishes another proof of the fallibility of human endeavour. Superficially the subject he has selected for treatment presents no great subtlety—it is only when one comes to probe beneath the surface that one recognises how complex and varied are the issues involved. Men have been tempted before this, both on and off the stage, by fair women, and fallen victims to the strength of their own baser passions. So also have men made of their dead selves the stepping-stones by which to rise to better things. But, although unmistakably the object of the author is to point this moral, Mr. Jones's piece is found, on careful analysis, to teach no such lesson. More truly does it show the enervating quality of love, or rather of a passion so strong, so over-mastering, so deeply-rooted that no consideration, either of honour or of duty, is sufficient to repress



it. Unhappily, the dramatist who elects to make his hero the slave rather than the master of his emotions courts the obvious danger of alienating his audience and wrecking his play.

This is precisely what Mr. Jones has done in the present instance. The Rev. Michael Feversham, despite his fervent protestations and high aspirations, is, after all, but a weak-kneed, invertebrate creature, who can hardly claim to command either our admiration or respect. Narrow-minded and intolerant, he strenuously condemns in others the very weakness to which he himself becomes an easy prey at the first onslaught. An Anglican clergyman of austere principles, he meets Audrie Lesden, a lady of doubtful antecedents, whom he believes to be a widow, and incontinently falls beneath the spell of her charms. Audrie herself is a curious mixture—a sensualist of a not uncommon type, to whom religion appeals as an emotion rather than as an intellectual conviction. Realising that Michael shrinks from the attempt to raise her to the height he himself seeks to attain, she determines—not without occasional compunctions, speedily stifled, however—to drag him down to her own level. In this object she succeeds. By a series of perfectly possible coincidences, the two are left alone for twelve hours on an otherwise uninhabited island, with the result—apparently quite natural in the dramatist's eyes, if almost incredible to those of the ordinary spectator—that this high-minded clergyman forgets his vows, his duty, and the respect due even to a woman as base as Audrie. To the enormity of his transgression Michael's conscience awakens but tardily, and it is not until he learns of the return of Audrie's husband, and recognises the imminent danger of discovery, that he determines upon a public confession as the only true way to salvation. The event takes place in the Minster church at Cleveheddon on the morning of its reconsecration. Nothing could be more brilliant or more realistic than the spectacle, with its fashionable throng of worshippers, its procession of acolytes and of priests, its sense of grandeur and of impressiveness. Whether, however, the presentation on the stage of so sacred a ceremony is likely to please all tastes we leave others to decide. In presence of his congregation, Michael relates the story of his fall, and then slowly quits the church in which he feels he is no longer worthy to minister as priest. To the distant monastery of San Salvatore, near Florence, he goes, in the hope of finding rest and forgetfulness; but even there the image of Audrie Lesden remains as an abiding memory, and when at length, like a repentant Frou-Frou, she reappears, attired in the conventional black dress, he cannot refrain from taking her to his arms and soothing her last moments with



loving words. Clearly, for such a couple, the one as passively feeble as the other is actively wicked, there can only be contempt, and contempt of a kind which one is tempted to express in no measured terms.

Besides the mistaken ethics of the piece, *Michael and His Lost Angel* sins grievously in the direction of bad taste and of incorrigible dulness. The play is little more than a series of duologues between hero and heroine, the monotony of which, as the action progresses, becomes more and more intolerable. Mr. Forbes Robertson looked the part of the "pale young priest" to perfection, his dignified bearing, passionate outbursts, and exquisitely balanced diction creating a profound impression. But even he found it impossible to arouse sympathy for a character so irresolute and so contemptible as the Reverend Michael Feversham. Miss Marion Terry gave a beautiful picture of the finer side of Audrie Lesden, but unfortunately Nature has denied her the ability, required to complete the portrait, of bringing into evidence the devilish witchery of such a woman. The remaining parts are little better than sketches, but in every instance were effectively played by the members of a thoroughly competent cast.

### THE LATE MR. CASTELLO.

An Original Farce, in Three Acts, by SYDNEY GRUNDY. Produced at the Comedy Theatre, December 28, 1895.

Captain Trefusis ..	Mr. LEONARD BOYNE.	Mrs. Bickerdyke ..	Miss ROSE LECLERCQ.
Sir Pinto Wanklyn..	Mr. CYRIL MAUDE.	Avice Bickerdyke ..	Miss ESME BERINGER.
Jack Uniacke..	Mr. J. G. GRAHAME.	Mrs. Castello ..	Miss WINIFRED EMERY.
Spencer ..	Mr. J. BYRON.		

Mr. Sydney Grundy presents the curious spectacle of a playwright whose method is as antiquated as his manner is distinctly modern. In the matter of construction he is half a century behind the times; in point of dialogue he is, if anything, rather in advance of them. Simplicity and directness in the conduct of a story—qualities which appeal with peculiar force to the great bulk of the playgoing public of to-day—are to him as abhorred things. The greater the intricacy of a plot the better pleased apparently is he with it. The result is that, with few exceptions, his works bear an appearance of artificiality, of unreality, which would be almost fatal to their success were it not for the brilliancy of the dialogue and the aptness of the characterisation. In *The Late Mr. Castello* most of Mr. Grundy's worst faults are, we regret to say, united. So involved is the plot that the author's meaning is almost lost in its complications, and yet so thin is it that only by dint of strenuous hammering has it been beaten out to the necessary length. The story moves in a circle—what may, indeed, be termed a vicious circle—which might just as well be

broken through at one moment as at another. Even Mr. Grundy's most constant quality—his wit—seems in a measure also to have deserted him on this occasion, for although the piece contains brilliant moments, these are more than counterbalanced by a succession of particularly dull quarters of an hour. The story resolves itself into a love-duel between Mrs. Castello and a certain Captain Trefusis, who meet, become passionately attached, agree and disagree, quarrel and make it up, and finally fall into each other's arms, an engaged couple, all within the brief space of six hours. Mrs. Castello is by no means a pleasing kind of lady. A widow, she trades upon her pretended affection for a husband she hated, and endeavours to inflame the ardour of her suitor by reiterated vows of constancy to the memory of her dead spouse. Captain Trefusis meets these declarations by references to a hypothetical sweetheart named Beryl, and this game of see-saw, with its continued alternations of success and failure, goes on until the author deems it well finally to drop the curtain. To the development of the plot two other couples contribute in a greater or less degree; but as the chief part of their conversation is carried on in the jargon of Capel-court, the spectator speedily wearies of them. Although her memory played her one or two strange tricks, Miss Rose Leclercq's performance of Mrs. Bickerdyke, humorous, polished, and superbly conceived, was the best of the evening. As Mrs. Castello, Miss Winifred Emery showed a genuine sense of comedy, and, albeit the part is hardly sympathetic, played with much charm and grace. Mr. Cyril Maude gave another of his clever "old men" sketches; but, frankly, we should be glad to see this talented actor in something a little more novel, even were it merely the character of a schoolboy; while Miss Esmé Beringer and Mr. J. G. Grahame proved fairly effective as a pair of prosaic lovers. Mr. Leonard Boyne unfortunately appeared unable to grasp the real significance of the part of Captain Trefusis, playing it in such doleful fashion as to create a general feeling of depression.

### ONE OF THE BEST.

A Drama, in Four Acts, by SEYMOUR HICKS and GEORGE EDWARDS. Produced at the Adelphi Theatre, December 21, 1895.

Dudley Keppel .. ..	Mr. WILLIAM TERRISS.	Private Montessoro ..	Mr. RICHARD BRENNAND.
Phillip Ellsworth ..	Mr. W. L. ABINGDON.	Private Snipe .. ..	Mr. WEBB DARLEIGH.
Lieut.-Gen. Coventry ..	Mr. CHARLES FULTON.	Private White .. ..	Mr. HERRICK.
Sir Arch. McGregor ..	Mr. EDWARD SASS.	Jason Jupp .. ..	Mr. H. ATHOL FORD.
The Rev. Dr. Penrose ..	Mr. JULIAN CROSS.	Esther Coventry ..	Miss MILLWARD.
M. Jules de Gruchy ..	Mr. L. DELORME.	Mary Penrose .. ..	Miss EDITH OSTLER.
Private Jupp .. ..	Mr. HARRY NICHOLLS.	Kitty Spencer .. ..	Miss VANE FEATHERSTON.
Sergeant Hennessey ..	Mr. A. W. FITZ-GERALD.	Mrs. Spencer .. ..	Miss KATE KEARNEY.
Corporal Smythe .. ..	Mr. WALLER.		
Private Ginger .. ..	Mr. COLE.		

The success of the new Adelphi drama, and success we have:

no doubt it is destined to enjoy, will certainly not spring from the originality of the story or the cleverness of the writing. The authors, indeed, are far too wise to depend upon such uncertain elements, preferring to pin their faith to old-fashioned methods and to the inherent strength of one particular situation. To this, as the most important feature of the production, we may as well refer at once. Founded on the notorious Dreyfus incident, it provides a picture alike thrilling and animated. Lieutenant Dudley Keppel, of the 2nd Highlanders, has been found guilty of purloining certain weighty documents, containing details of a proposed new scheme for the defence of Portsmouth harbour, and, unable to establish his innocence, is sentenced to public degradation and dismissal from the Army. The scene represents the barrack square at Portsmouth. For the moment the stage is empty, save for the presence of a solitary sentinel. After a brief pause, however, there is heard in the distance the muffled sound of a fife-and-drum band, and presently the instrumentalists themselves appear, playing the "Dead March" from *Saul*. Following them comes a regiment of Highlanders, until, as the stage gradually fills, the prisoner himself marches on, pale, haggard, yet dignified, the central figure of an impressive picture. At the word of command one of the sergeants steps forward, and with almost needless brutality, tears from the prisoner's uniform his medals and shoulder straps, and finally divests him of his jacket. One last indignity remains—the surrender of his sword—but against this the man's pride rebels, and drawing the weapon from its sheath, he breaks it across his knee. The whole incident is extraordinarily vivid, forcible, and pathetic, and only marred by the introduction of certain minor details which tend to rob the scene of its realism, and which are not even theatrically effective.

Apart from this episode, the story set forth in *One of the Best* follows the usual conventional lines of melodrama. The hero's discomfiture is brought about by the treachery of one Phillip Ellsworth, who, having seduced the daughter of the commanding officer at Portsmouth, prevails upon her to obtain his admission to the room in which the coveted plans are concealed. Interrupted in his task of purloining them, Ellsworth assumes Keppel's cloak and manner. When, moreover, the alarm is given, he contrives to make good his escape, and it is the latter who is discovered in his place. The circumstance that Keppel is himself the designer of the plans, and could therefore have no motive for stealing them, does not apparently occur to anyone, and accordingly he is sentenced to be drummed out of the regiment. Needless to say, his innocence is proved in the last act to the



satisfaction of everyone, and the piece concludes with his reinstatement. In Dudley Keppel, Mr. William Terriss has a part after his own heart, and very gallantly and earnestly he plays it. Than his acting in the degradation scene nothing could well be finer. Miss Millward was hardly at her best as the female villain of the piece, but that was the fault of the character rather than of the actress. Mr. Harry Nicholls got an enormous amount of capital out of the part of a comic private, his efforts being successfully seconded by Miss Vane Featherston as Kitty Spencer. Serviceable aid was also given by Mr. W. L. Abingdon, Mr. Charles Fulton, Mr. Edward Sass, Mr. L. Delorme, and particularly by Mr. A. W. Fitzgerald.

### A WOMAN'S REASON.

A Play, in Three Acts, by CHARLES H. E. BROOKFIELD and F. C. PHILIPS. Produced at the Shaftesbury Theatre, December 27, 1895.

Lord Bletchley ..	Mr. CHARLES BROOKFIELD.	James .. ..	Mr. LESLY THOMSON.
The Rev. Cosmo Pretious .. ..	Mr. HENRY KEMBLE.	Footman .. ..	Mr. CHARLES GOODHART.
Captain Crozier ..	Mr. COOHLAN.	Lady Bletchley ..	Miss CARLOTTA ADDISON.
Stephen D'Acosta ..	Mr. LEWIS WALLER.	The Hon. Nina Keith .. ..	Mrs. TREE.
Algie .. ..	Master STEWART DAWSON.	Agatha Pretious ..	Miss MAUDE MILLETT.
Mr. McGeorge ..	Mr. HAMILTON KNIGHT.	Curtice .. ..	Miss VIOLET STEVENS.
Martin Tutt .. ..	Mr. E. J. MALYON.	Leah D'Acosta ..	Miss FLORENCE WEST.

To the critic, by whom in these days even mediocrity is welcomed as a gift from the gods, it is a genuine pleasure to meet with a play which combines clever workmanship, brilliant dialogue, and an interesting story. Given these qualities, one may well be tempted to overlook any slight imperfections discernible in the piece. In *A Woman's Reason*, Messrs. Brookfield and Philips have provided a drama of the kind we refer to, and one which brings the past year worthily to a close. No one who has ever witnessed *Frou-Frou* can fail to be struck with the close resemblance existing between the new play and MM. Meilhac and Halévy's famous comedy. Alike in plot and characterisation, the two pieces have a similarity which, if accidental, offers one of the most marvellous examples of the power of coincidence. Mr. Brookfield, it should be stated, has publicly denied all knowledge of *Frou-Frou*—a circumstance, by the way, which says little for his erudition as a student of the contemporary drama; but as his partner has proved more reticent, it may be supposed that Mr. Philips boasts a closer acquaintance with French dramatic literature. The matter is one of slight importance, however. Whether the authors have relied for the groundwork of their piece upon their own invention or the ingenuity of others is of much less moment to the public than the circumstance that they have produced a



really admirable play. To some it may appear that they have erred in their final act in bringing together a husband and wife between whom lies, and must ever lie, the shadow of so terrible a tragedy as that created by a woman's lapse into adultery. For ourselves, we hold them fully justified in the *dénouement* they have given to their drama, inasmuch as they have chosen, and in our opinion rightly chosen, the paths of charity and kindness rather than of revenge and hatred. "Kill or forgive"—in these words does Stephen D'Acosta formulate the only alternative possible under the circumstances, and it is to be counted to him for righteousness that, departing from the tenets of his own faith, he is moved to choose the better part.

Nina Keith, daughter of the impecunious Lord Bletchley, is persuaded, when quite a girl, to accept the offer made her by the wealthy but humbly born Stephen D'Acosta, to whom her father is under heavy monetary obligations. The result is what might have been expected; Stephen becomes more and more immersed in business, while Nina is content to lead a butterfly existence. Even the child born to them only serves to widen the gulf that separates one from the other. For little Algie has become the idol of his aunt, Leah D'Acosta, upon whom, indeed, the burden of all home matters has fallen. Suddenly, Nina's eyes are opened to the humiliating position she occupies in her husband's home, and, stung by jealousy, careless of what the consequences may be, she accepts the proposal made by a certain unprincipled but fascinating Captain Crozier, to fly with him. So far, it will be observed, the story has proceeded on lines identical with those of *Frou-Frou*. Here, however, the resemblance ceases. Nina quickly realises her mistake, and, shame-stricken by her own behaviour, she abandons her lover. After some months of continuous searching, Crozier discovers her whereabouts, and forcing his way into her company, entreats her to return, not, however, as his wife, but his mistress, until the death of an elderly aunt, upon whose goodwill he counts, shall leave them free to marry. This ignoble, and, we are constrained to add, unspeakably foolish, offer is, of course, contemptuously declined. Meanwhile, Stephen has obtained a divorce, but has generously agreed that Algie shall pass a certain period with his mother. Through the window, Crozier, having first carefully deposited his gloves on the piano, in order apparently that they may be found there subsequently by Nina's husband, observes Stephen approaching, and, with incredible foolishness, is allowed by her to conceal himself in the adjoining bedroom. The sequel may be guessed. Fortunately, however, Nina is able to convince Stephen of her perfect innocence as

regards Crozier's presence, and in the end to secure his entire forgiveness.

Although manifestly *A Woman's Reason* does not lack faults, it is, as a whole, one of the best and most interesting plays which the past year has brought us. Equally, too, its performance can be spoken of in terms of high praise. Mr. Charles Brookfield has seldom been seen to greater advantage than as the sophisticated, unscrupulous, toadying old Lord Bletchley, while as the injured husband, Mr. Lewis Waller played with a fine restraint, and yet, when called upon, with a forcible vigour altogether masterly. As for Mr. Coghlan's Captain Crozier, it seemed, indeed, save for a slight tendency on the actor's part towards slowness, as if time had put back the clock, and given us this consummate artist once more in the prime of his strength and talent. Mrs. Tree, if a trifle unequal, gave a superbly-finished portrait of the nervous, wayward, feather-brained Nina, and Miss Florence West a no less cleverly thought out sketch of the matter-of-fact Leah. Not for a long time has a boy actor so natural or so winsome as Master Stewart Dawson been seen on the stage. To the remainder of the company every credit is due for an admirable all-round performance.

### TOMMY ATKINS.

A Military Drama in Four Acts, by ARTHUR SHIRLEY and BENJAMIN LANDECK. Produced at the Duke of York's Theatre, December 23, 1895.

Harold Wilson ..	Mr. CHARLES CARTWRIGHT.	Colour - Sergeant	
Stephen Raymond	Mr. LYSTON LYLE.	Paddy Molloy ..	Mr. RICHARD PURDON.
Ebenezer Skindle	Mr. LENNOX PAWLE.	Ruth Raymond ..	Miss GERTRUDE KINGSTON.
Captain Richard		Elsie Wilson ..	Miss CONSTANCE COLLIER.
Maitland .. ..	Mr. EDWARD O'NIELL.	Rose Selwyn ..	Miss CLARE HARFORD.
Captain Bob		Margaret Mait- ..	
Sparrow .. ..	Mr. WILFRED FORSTER.	land. . . . .	Miss OLLIFFE.
Little Jack .. ..	Miss JESSICA BLACK.	Kate Perkins ..	Miss NAOMI NEILSON.
Private Mason ..	Mr. G. W. COCKBURN.	Martha .. ..	Miss MINNIE MAJOR.

It is, perhaps, hardly fair to judge Messrs. Shirley and Landeck's drama by its performance on a stage where, of necessity, much of the scenic effect, and not a few of its most stirring incidents, had to be sacrificed owing to want of space. At the Pavilion *Tommy Atkins* enjoyed a phenomenal success, due in great measure to conditions entirely lacking at the Duke of York's. It is a drama of the usual east-end order—if anything, a trifle above the average of its class—but that anyone should have believed for a moment in the possibility of it attracting audiences to a west-end theatre passes comprehension. The experiment has, however, been tried, and after a week's duration abandoned in despair. The story deals with the adventures of one Harold Wilson, who, having been reared for the Church, becomes so disgusted with the intolerance and uncharitableness of self-styled Christians that he

promptly discards his curate's coat for the Queen's uniform. To tell of his numerous exploits, as of those of Ruth Raymond, the heroine, would demand too much space, and it must suffice that virtue is duly rewarded in the last act, in which a picturesque presentment of the Malaki Fort in Egypt is given. The only performance which calls for comment was that of Mr. G. W. Cockburn, who, playing his original part of Mason, a dissolute, but good-hearted Private, created a distinctly favourable impression. The remainder of the company seemed to be engaged in playing that quaint, but not altogether satisfactory, game of setting square pegs in round holes.

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### GAFFER JARGE.

A Rustic Comedy, in One Act, by ALICIA RAMSAY. Produced at the Comedy Theatre, January 11.

Gaffer Jarge	..	..	Mr. CYRIL MAUDE.	Mrs. Jones	..	..	Miss ALICE MANSFIELD.
Master Tom	..	..	Mr. CLARENCE BLAKISTON.	Susie	..	..	Miss JESSICA BLACK.
Benson	..	..	..	Mr. J. BYRON.			

As a first effort *Gaffer Jarge* may be described as of some promise, although of little value. The story is conventional to the last degree, while the dialogue might be curtailed with advantage. But there can be traced in the piece little touches of character and of a quaint humour which tend to show that Mrs. Ramsay, when she has learnt the business of the stage more thoroughly, may yet become a serviceable playwright. The plot of her rustic comedy is simple. Gaffer Jarge, an old fellow of seventy, receives notice to quit his homestead unless he can find £100 within a month in order to satisfy his liability on a deed executed by his father. The rascally factor inadvertently leaves the document behind him, and the Gaffer is thereupon tempted to destroy it. But the voice of his grand-daughter, coupled with the promptings of his own conscience, restrains him, while the unexpected return (unexpected save by the audience) of the young squire secures him from all further molestation. In parts of the dryly humorous order Mr. Cyril Maude is inimitable, but his performance of Gaffer Jarge plainly proved that he has not an ounce of pathos in his composition. Miss Alice Mansfield gave an amazingly clever study of a gossiping old country-woman, and Miss Jessica Black a very pleasing sketch of the child, Susie.

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### THE PANTOMIMES.

#### CINDERELLA AT DRURY LANE.

*Cinderella* is the subject of the Drury Lane pantomime this season, the book, which is exactly what a book of the sort ought to be, bearing the signatures of Sir Augustus Harris, Mr.



Cecil Raleigh, and Mr. Arthur Sturgis. We all know it is customary on such occasions to repeat the stereotyped words that Sir Augustus has surpassed himself; but in the present instance the phrase has something more than a mere perfunctory application. Looking back upon the long series of splendid predecessors, we doubt if any can vie in magnificence and taste with this, the latest effort of this manager. It is not alone that the dresses and appointments are of the most dazzling description, but that in every department may be detected a spirit of refinement and rarest delicacy. The fun starts early with a scene depicting Toy Land, which ought to bring unbounded delight to the heart of every boy and girl. It reaches its height in the Baronial Hall on the occasion of a party given by the Baron and Baroness to a few select friends. Nor, in point of spectacular effect, could anything be finer than the scene of the Wood, with its instantaneous change from autumn to winter, or that of Fairyland, where Cinderella, having been decked out in gorgeous array, sets out in her auto-motor carriage for the Prince's ball, which in itself presents a picture of brilliancy and of colour-combination never, it is tolerably safe to say, surpassed on any stage. When it is stated that Mr. Herbert Campbell and Mr. Dan Leno appear as the Baron and Baroness, Miss Sophie Larkin and Miss Emily Miller as the ugly sisters, and the Brothers Griffiths as a couple of episodical characters, and that all are at their best, it will be understood how merrily the ball of fun is kept rolling from start to finish. Miss Ada Blanche makes a fascinating Prince, Miss Isa Bowman a bewitching Cinderella, Miss Dagmar (besides being an accomplished vocalist) a stately groom-of-the-chamber, and Miss Marguerite Cornille (an exceedingly clever new-comer) a very pretty and piquant French Ambassador.

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#### ROBINSON CRUSOE AT THE LYCEUM.

The young people have no stauncher or more constant friend than Mr. Oscar Barrett, who every year provides them with a pantomime as full of fun and gaiety, of laughter and of merriment, as an egg is of meat. This season, with the assistance of Mr. Horace Lennard, he gives them *Robinson Crusoe*, whose well-known adventures are always a source of interest and attraction. The piece opens gaily in the port of Hull, whence Robinson, torn from the arms of loving Polly Hopkins, is hurried away by Will Atkins and his motley crew. Then we have a vision, ingeniously contrived, of the ship in full sail, the storm at sea, the wreck, and, finally, of Robinson alone upon his



fragile raft. Presently we find him safe on shore, in company with Man Friday, his parrot, cat and faithful dog. To the same spot come Polly and Mrs. Crusoe, Atkins and his myrmidons, Starboard and Larboard, and others, who, with the savages, contrive to keep the fun going in the most hilarious manner. Mr. Barrett reserves his great effect for the last scene, which reveals the royal grove of palms. Here occurs a ballet of the most exquisite character, so beautifully conceived, so dazzling in its colouring, and so brilliantly harmonised, as to defy description. By her pleasing singing and dainty dancing, Miss Alice Brookes, as Robinson, won the hearts of all. Miss Grace Lane proved an exceptionally charming Polly, while Mr. Victor Stevens, Mr. Fred Emney, Mr. Fred Storey, Mr. Charles Lauri (a wonderfully agile Man Friday), and Miss Susie Vaughan kept the audience in roars of laughter. A word of special commendation is also due to little Miss Geraldine Somerset for her clever performance as the Spirit of Adventure.

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#### IN PARIS.

The past month has been as uneventful in the dramatic world as in other matters it has been animated. Still, a piece by M. Sardou is always a big item to the good; and though his *Marcelle* at the Gymnase—written, it is supposed, for Madame Bernhardt—has not quite come up to the mark with Madame Jane Hading, it is, nevertheless, destined to remain the piece of the day for a little time to come. M. Sardou has remained faithful to the old methods, as appears from the utterances of one of his characters, and the nature of the piece itself. There is not a pennyweight of psychology or pessimism in the four acts, and its conclusion is quite satisfactory for those who like the stage for its pictures of life as it is not. *Marcelle* is reader to a clever lady of rank. She is very pretty and fascinating, just the sort of person a clever lady of rank with a son at the inflammable age would choose for her reader. *Marcelle* has a past, a fact which is equally natural. She has had a lover, whom her late brother attempted to shoot. In spite of this, the son loves *Marcelle*, who has explained that she is innocent; she was placed in a false position to save her brother, who, in a drunken fit, had tried to kill the alleged lover. The latter took refuge in her bed room, and hence her apparent dishonour. The alleged lover, wishing to marry her, of course will not tell the truth; and so, when our poor *Marcelle* is on the verge of throwing herself, in despair, into the son's arms, the astute old lady worms the secret out of the scoundrel, and all is made right. *C'est vieux jeu* worthy of the

immortal Scribe; still, it is pleasant to go backwards sometimes. There has been nothing else worth noting but a gloomy Swedish piece, *Une Mère*, by Mme. Allin Ameen, at the Théâtre de l'Œuvre. A deformed child is born. The mother strangles the child to save it from the misery to which its deformity will expose it, and gives herself up to justice—quite an antique mother.

Even the worm, the proverb says, will turn, and at last the Parisian playgoer has risen up in wrath to demand that pieces shall begin at the advertised time, not whenever it suits the leading lady's convenience; and that the waits between acts shall not be so interminably long. On one recent occasion, at the Vaudeville, the curtain was an hour all but ten minutes late, and, when at last the piece did begin, even Madame Réjane had to bear the brunt of the audience's anger and ill-will. It is quite certain that this sort of thing would not be tolerated in London, and there is no reason why it should be in Paris.

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#### IN BERLIN.

The most interesting event of the New Year in the dramatic world of Germany has been the production of Herr Gerhart Hauptmann's *Florian Geyer* at the Deutsches Theatre, Berlin. Seldom has the first performance of a play been awaited with more curiosity, or given rise to so much gossip and excitement. *Florian Geyer* had been long detained in the Censor's office, and this fact, which was widely known, tended to add to, rather than to diminish, the speculation which was rife concerning the play. However, the authorities finally passed it, and then every kind of melancholy prophecy was heard. The forecasts were to some extent justified, for a great struggle ensued between the management of the Deutsches Theatre and the police authorities. But, after long discussion, the play was eventually brought out, and forthwith became the subject of much criticism, favourable and the reverse. It has been attacked by adherents of the classical school, who assign great importance to the form and construction of a play. It was, perhaps, with a view to disarming certain critics that Herr Hauptmann decided to call his work a drama. Its subject is an episode in the Peasants' War in South Germany in the sixteenth century; and the rage of the masses, who rise up in rebellion against intolerable oppression, is depicted by the author in some very fine lines. *Florian Geyer*, whose idea is the creation of a United Germany under an evangelical Emperor, is only one factor in the social movement of his time.

In real life, as in the drama, he is shipwrecked through the purity of his intentions and the extravagance of his ideal. In its essence Florian Geyer's ideal is far nobler and broader than that of Prince Bismarck, who brought about the unification of Germany by diplomacy and force. But Geyer is a dreamer, and not a practical man, and therein lies his weakness as well as his strength. The most remarkable thing in the play is the extraordinary accuracy with which its mediæval scenes have been staged. No trouble has been spared to make the scenery and costumes exact copies of authentic originals, and the various stage pictures are masterpieces of spectacular effect. The play, which contains sixty parts, consists of a prologue and five acts, the whole taking three hours and a half to perform. It was originally intended to be given in two sections extending over two nights, but this design was wisely abandoned, and the present form substituted for it. The author, like Wagner, is quite indifferent to the feelings of his audience, and practically says that if people want to see his play they must accommodate themselves to him, for he is not disposed to consider their convenience. It may be said at once that the play is too long drawn out. The several acts, though interesting in themselves, possess but little unity when the piece is regarded as a whole, and the impression left on the mind of the spectator, instead of being clear and well defined, is blurred and confused. The reception of *Florian Geyer* on the first night was a very mingled one, and when the curtain fell there was a burst of applause, which, however, could not silence the storm of disapproval which rose at the same moment from those to whom the piece did not appeal. Whatever judgment may eventually be passed upon his play, Herr Hauptmann cannot be said to have left his public indifferent.

*Monsieur le Directeur*, the original of *The Chili Widow*, has been translated into German and produced with great success in Berlin. Herr Tewele, an importation from Vienna, is admirably suited with the part of the easy-going Government official, whose flirtation with the charming Suzanne, played by Fraülein Schwendemann, forms the pivot of the farcical intrigue. The "internationalisation" of successful farces, in whatever tongue they may originally be written, seems to be becoming more and more a matter of course.

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#### IN ITALIAN CITIES.

The past month saw the birth of very little in the way of novelty on the Italian stage. This, of course, does not mean that any lack of good pieces was apparent on the chief stages of



Italy when the theatres re-opened after the Christmas holidays. Of strictly new works, however, there were really none of any importance. The Scala, Milan, re-opened well with M. Saint-Saëns' *Henry VIII.*, in which Signor Sammarco, Signor Varela, Signora Felia Letvine, and Signora Parsi played the leading parts. Signor Mascagni's *Ratcliff* was produced at Genoa on the 2nd of the month, under the personal direction of the composer. The proprietors of the chief theatre of Modena provided *Otello* for the theatre-goers of that town, but had to withdraw it soon afterwards. *Traviata*, which then took the place of *Otello*, proved more satisfactory. In the first week of January, *La Vigilia de la Sagra*, a comedy by Signor A. G. Cagna, made its first appearance at the Lirico Internazionale, Milan. The plot of this work is of a simple character, and resembles in some respects that of *Moroso de la Nona*. M. Massenet's *Werther* was produced simultaneously at Genoa and Verona, while the choice in the case of Pesaro, Turin, Pistoja, and Padua fell upon *Carmen*. At the Teatro Nuovo, Florence, on January 11, *Finestra Murata*, a new comedy from the pen of Signor Rosadi, an Italian advocate, made its first appearance with good effect. *Trionfo*, a new drama in four acts, by Signor Roberto Bracco, also met with a good reception on the occasion of its initial appearance at the Alfieri, Turin, on the 10th.

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#### IN MADRID.

Among the few new works which saw the light on the Madrid stage in the course of the past month, *El Judio Polaco*, the only rendering which has ever been made in Castilian of MM. Erckmann-Chatrian's well-known melodrama *Le Juif Polonais*, must take the first place. Strange though it is that a work of the kind should not before this have found its way to Madrid, where Sir Henry Irving's achievements are rather well known, stranger still is it that its appearance now should be due to what is neither more nor less than an accidental discovery that such a play existed. It is said that a Spanish gentleman interested in theatrical matters chanced, while on a visit to Paris, to drop into a theatre where *Le Juif Polonais* was being played. On his return home, he commissioned Señores Gonzalez Llana and Francos Rodriguez, the joint authors of *El Pan del Pobre*, to turn the play into their native tongue, and in a short time *El Judio Polaco* was introduced to a Madrid audience at the Teatro Español. Its reception was not perhaps quite so enthusiastic as one might have expected, though Señor Donato Jiménez acted the chief part with great skill. A lyrical farce with the title of *El Principe Heredero* was produced for the first time



at the Teatro Romea with success. The authors of the libretto are Señores Lucio and Arniches, and of the music, Señores Brull, Nieto, and Torregrosa. *El Marido de Mamá*, a short farce which was put on the stage of the Lara, fell somewhat flat, though the announcement of Señores Criado and Cocat as the authors roused some show of appreciation in the audience.

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### IN VIENNA.

At the German Volkstheater, a new comedy entitled *Comtesse Guckerl* has been brought out, and has met with general approval. The scene is laid in Carlsbad in 1818, in which year Goethe was among the visitors to that famous place of resort, and was invited by the management to the theatre. He accepted the invitation, and, seated in the box which had been reserved for him, became the cynosure of every eye. One would hardly attach much importance to this fact; and, indeed, it was not generally known until Franz von Schönthau and Franz Koppel-Ellfeld introduced the incident in *Comtesse Guckerl*. This is the only new thing in the piece, for the rest, though sufficiently amusing, has been modelled on familiar lines. A Russian officer, born in Potsdam, falls in love with a young widowed Austrian countess, who turns her beautiful and merry eyes on everyone in so bewitching a way that she is known as "the Bright-eyed Countess" (the Comtesse Guckerl). The officer first seeks to take the citadel by storm; but he is repulsed, with some wounding of his *amour propre*. He then proceeds in a gentler mood, and his wooing is eventually crowned with success. The billing and cooing and teasing which go on between the lovers form the first part of the piece. The second shows us another pair of lovers, represented by a bashful official, who is bewitched and led to the altar by a resolute hoydenish school-girl. Then there are a Court Councillor from Prague, his wife (who speaks the Prague dialect), an old general who has never forgotten his first love, and several other minor personages, whom one has met before in numerous pieces. The play is very well constructed, and, although everyone knows what is coming, it is developed with so much skill, and contains such amusing situations, that the audience is put into a thoroughly good humour, and the curtain falls amid rounds of applause.

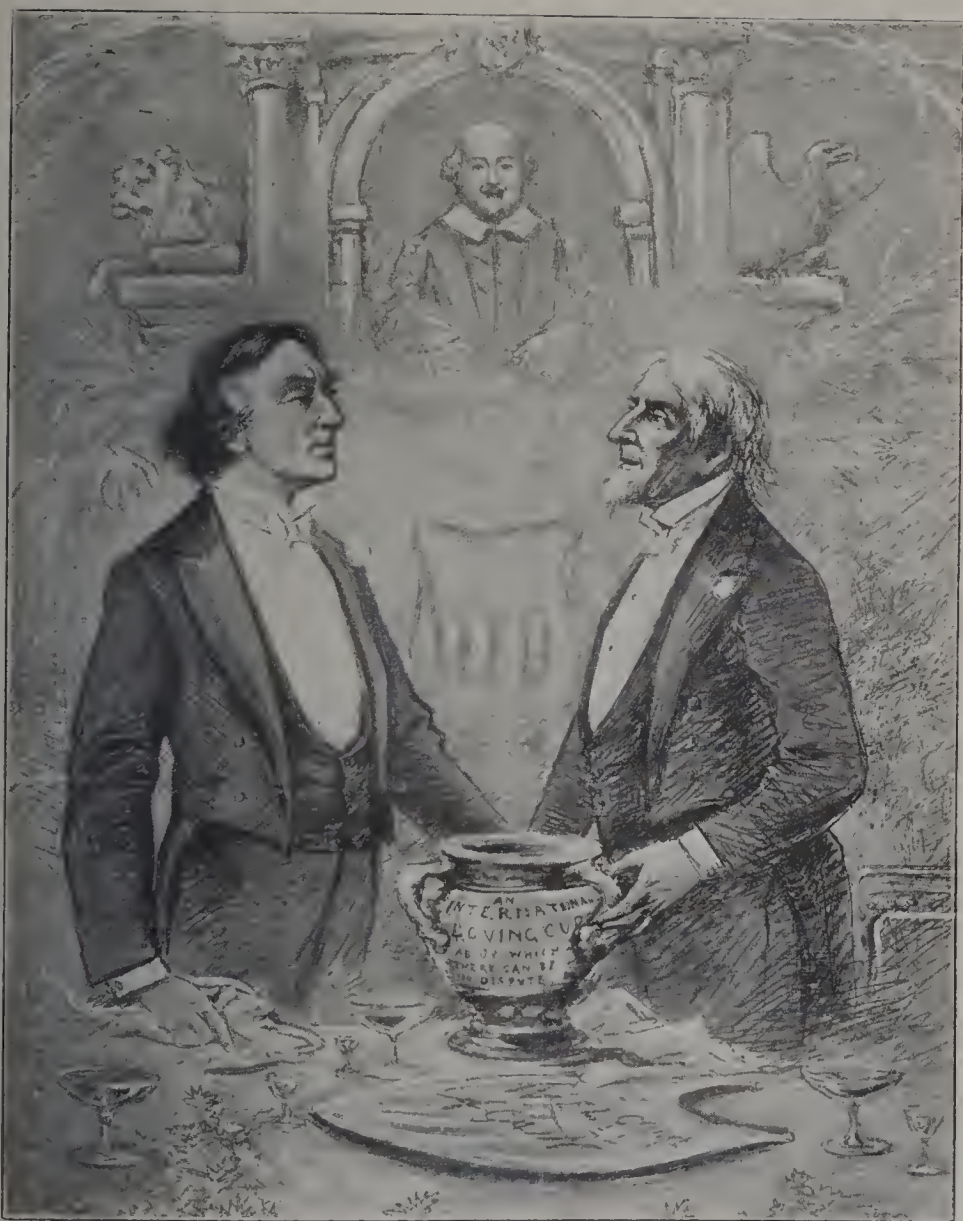
*Der Pumpmajor*, produced at the Theater in der Josephstadt, is by Julius Horst and Leo Stein; but they have drawn their material from a five-act comedy entitled *The Revisor*, by the famous Russian author of *Dead Souls*, Nicolai Gogol. *Der*

and its touch-and-go business for success. Mr. Otis Harlan is seen in the principal part. The play is likely to keep up the reputation of Hoyt's Theatre as the house of long runs. In *Girl Wanted*, a farcical comedy by Mr. R. N. Stephenson, produced at the Fourteenth Street Theatre, Mr. Frank Bush has an opportunity of appearing in no fewer than seven separate characters. Mr. Burnand's latest adaptation, *Mrs. Ponderbury's Past*, has been produced in New York with none of the attendant accidents that have so materially shortened its London run. Mr. Stuart Robson is Mr. Ponderbury, and, while making the part a little too senile, is always very funny. Mrs. Robson is Polly Stubbs, and Miss Henrietta Vaders looks and acts the Dragon to perfection.

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#### SIR HENRY IRVING'S TOUR.

The strong anti-English feeling temporarily aroused in the United States by the President's Message had no unfavourable effect upon the fortunes of Sir Henry Irving and Miss Terry in New York. To the end they had a continuous succession of full audiences, and were greeted by each with striking enthusiasm. The homage done to them by the American press in general is well illustrated in a farewell article devoted to them by the *Tribune*. In the course of eight weeks, that journal says, "they have set before this community a long series of dramatic representations, of the highest order, giving great pleasure, maintaining a noble standard of art, and supplying a continual impetus to beneficial thought and high endeavour. Their season will be memorable for the production of *King Arthur*, *Don Quixote*, and *A Story of Waterloo*, and for a superb revival of *Macbeth*. They have gained new laurels in those plays, and they have refreshed the lustre of previous triumphs. Portia, Beatrice, Margaret and Queen Henrietta Maria, Shylock, Benedick, Charles I., Matthias, Louis XI., Mephistopheles, Lesurques and Dubosc—no one of those achievements can be forgotten. For intellectual men, the presence of Henry Irving upon our stage has from the first been not less a benefit than a delight. Mind answers to mind; and it is one of the signal peculiarities of this great actor that, everywhere and under all circumstances, he is the cause of incessant intellectual activity. Without tumult, and simply through his tremendous energy and unresting labour, he arouses and stimulates, in every quarter, the intellectual forces of the time. Every thinker is aware of his presence and conscious of his influence. For nearly a quarter of a century his power in this respect has



UNCLE SAM'S WELCOME TO SIR HENRY IRVING.

(From the *Illustrated American*.)





been advancing—the power to stimulate thought, to awaken interest, to vitalise ambition, to refresh weary minds, to diffuse alacrity of spirit, and to hallow common life with the charm of romance. The contemporary intelligence, both in England and America, has been broadened, sharpened, and refined by his sumptuous ministration of the dramatic art, and the world is better because of his beneficent career. This may seem an exaggerated estimate of the influence of an actor, but it is one that will bear a rigorous examination. Irving's brilliant success in *The Bells* was made twenty-four years ago, and from that day to this he has moved steadily upward, leaving all competitors behind, until now he is the most potential and the most distinguished actor of this age. Such a conquest is achieved only by the wise use of imperial powers, the most strenuous labour, and the most conscientious devotion to those ideas and agencies which are naturally tributary to human happiness. This is the moral of the farewell performance of this extraordinary actor, and of the woman of genius and beauty with whom his artistic fortunes have been so auspiciously associated."

One noteworthy little incident of the stay in New York was the production of a novelty in the shape of *A Christmas Story*, an English version in blank verse, by Mr. Laurence Irving, Sir Henry's second son, of M. Maurice Boucher's one-act *Conte de Noël*, played at the Comédie Française in 1894. The scene is Paris, the time to-day. A young artist, somewhat over-fond of convivial company, has become neglectful of his wife and child. It is Christmas Eve, and the wife, left alone beside the child's cradle, in a garret looking upon the distant towers of Nôtre Dame, deplores her forlorn condition and beseeches the saints that her truant husband may be restored to her love and to his home. The hour is late, and still the rover does not come. At length the poor young woman falls asleep. Two statues of saints—St. Nicholas and St. Rose—carved in wood by her husband, now become animate, and after providing toys for the child, they declare their intention to reconcile, unite, and bless the parents. The artist, at this point, arrives home, tipsy. The saints surprise and reproach him, and in his wonder and dismay he admits his misconduct and promises amendment. The wife awakes, and is delighted with gifts, and still more with her husband's renewed affection. The sound of singing is heard—the solemn strains of a Christmas hymn—and the saints resume their position as statues. The husband and wife are once more at peace and happy, and as the light breaks in the east, the joyous bells ring in the Christmas morning. For the rest, the piece is gracefully written, and is prettily played by Mr. Valentine, Miss Maud

Milton, Mr. Fuller Mellish, and Miss May Whitty. It preceded a performance of *The Bells*, which, with Sir Henry Irving as Matthias, has not lost any of its old former power to fascinate an American audience. The *Tribune* well speaks of it as "the creation, not of the dramatist, but of the actor. The original story contains no warrant for anything even half so fine." *Charles I.* evoked another round of praise. "Indeed," said the *Mirror*, "it is useless to deny that Henry Irving is a master of all dramatic methods. He can be bold and free; he can be detailed. He is an impressionist painter; he is a realistic painter as well."

Continuing his tour, Sir Henry Irving appeared at the Chestnut Street Opera House, Philadelphia, on December 22, in *The Merchant of Venice*. The audience that night is described as one of the most remarkable gatherings ever seen in the place. "The distinguished actor and his gracious associate," said the *Philadelphia Press*, "now belong to two worlds, and the enthusiastic greeting extended to them last evening was ample evidence of the leading place they hold in the affections of the theatre-going public in the most American of cities. In choosing *The Merchant of Venice* as the opening bill of an engagement that promises to be more notable than any of its predecessors, on account of the scope, variety, and extent of the repertoire to be produced, Sir Henry came forward in what is unquestionably the greatest of his serious Shakspearean impersonations, the one above all others which might be selected to prove his greatness as an actor were a choice so circumscribed. Romanticism is the essence of his most successful art, but in Shylock we are given the most powerful illumination of life known to the contemporary stage, the consummation of natural expression in art. . . . The dominant note of Sir Henry Irving's Shylock is primal passion and racial revolt, in which, with all its implacable ferocity, there is a dignity and grandeur that seem to embody a prophetic inspiration. Altogether it is a strikingly finished study of the character in every detail. Who that has seen that wonderful make-up can ever forget the haunting figure of Shylock, withered and bent as he leans heavily on his staff, his garb mean and sordid, in contradistinction to the rich furs and materials of the gabardine in which Mr. Mansfield robed the Jew?"

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## Echoes from the Green Room.

MR. WYNDHAM and his company would have played *The Squire of Dames* before the Queen at Osborne, on January 27, had it not been for the death of Prince Henry of Battenberg.

IN our last issue, it may be remembered, we recorded that a pen and ink sketch, by Mr. Tom Nast, was given to Sir Henry Irving at the supper held in his honour by the New York Press Club. It represents Uncle Sam offering the actor a loving-cup. Underneath is the inscription, "Here's to Sir Henry, right royally knighted, he who has so royally nighted many of his countrymen at the Lyceum, who has proven that acting is an art, and himself its most brilliant champion." By the courtesy of the *Illustrated American*, we are now enabled to reproduce this sketch, which forms a pleasing memento of the actor's present visit to the United States.

MADAME BERNHARDT sailed early last month for New York, where she was to appear on the 19th.

MADAME RÉJANE is again to visit London during the summer, when she will appear first in *Viveurs!* a sketch of fast life in Paris, which is hardly likely to be much appreciated over here. One of its chief scenes is a dressmaker's trying-on room, where gowns are fitted *coram populo*, while another represents the Café Durand, for which, it is said, the Savoy Restaurant will be substituted. But this will not even be original, for exactly the same idea was carried into effect in Mr. Brookfield's *To-day*.

COLONEL MAPLESON will be the manager of the new Imperial Opera.

MADAME PATTI—who, by the way, has just left England for the south of Europe—rises superior to affectation. Facts to her are facts. "At the end of September," she writes, "I started on my concert tour through England, Scotland, and Ireland, and have only just returned home after one of the longest and most successful tours. It is impossible for me to describe the enthusiasm aroused everywhere by my singing, for in almost every town it was necessary to have a large body of police to escort me safely in my carriage through the crowd of excited people who stood for hours outside the concert hall and hotels to cheer me as I passed." Madame Patti will probably appear in *Miska L'Enchanteresse* during her coming stay in Nice.

SIGNOR VERDI is revising for Madame Calvé his *Macbeth*, originally produced at Florence in 1847. Though not remarkably successful, it has always been one of his favourite operas. Perhaps we may hear it in London next season.

MADAME ALBONI left the bulk of her property to various charities in Paris. "For," she said in her will, recently proved, "I established myself there in 1847, and in all circumstances I have found in that adorable country the most sympathetic reception and the most perfect courtesy; in one word, as a woman and as an artist, I have always been treated by the French with the greatest consideration. I wish, therefore, to show them my gratitude for the same. It is by singing and by following that supreme and, above all others, consoling art that I have acquired all the fortune which I possess; and I shall quit this life with the sweet thought of having disposed of the same in such manner as to encourage and console."

If you wish to annoy Madame Sarah Bernhardt, who is ever steadfast in her friendships, join in the prevailing tendency to decry the author of



*Théodora*. "You know," she said recently, "that I adore Sardou. He is a master of his art, and however much I like the younger men I allow no one to attack him in my presence. There's a man who knows how to write pieces, who knows the theatre and actors!"

MADAME BERNHARDT, writing from Lisbon, pays an emphatic tribute to the late M. Dumas. "My grief," she says, "is inconsolable. The artist loses a counsellor, a heart of inexhaustible goodness; a soul which gave me renewed courage, which quieted my timid misgivings as a woman. What beautiful letters I owe him—what excellent, noble advice he has given me! But what we women have lost above all is a defender. This great master's work is a perpetual defence of womankind. Marguerite Gauthier, born in the gutter, gilded in vice, is regenerated by the only genuine love she ever experienced. Casarine is absolved in a way. Dumas kills her, but does not punish her; death is not a punishment. With the exception of these two women, all Dumas' heroines struggle for their very lives, they are oppressed by man, society, and public opinion, and always, always Dumas cried 'pity!' for this poor being so violently attacked by those whom God created to defend her. May he, more far-seeing than we at the present moment, see the despair in our hearts, and hear the hosannah of our gratitude!"

BUT this defence of women, we must add, was not without its limitations. "Pooh!" he once remarked, "a woman marries a man because she likes him, or does not marry him because she does not like him. That is the beginning and the end of their analysis. I am surrounded by women, now mothers and grandmothers, whom I knew in their childhood. I have been able to observe very closely how much is implied by marriage, which I regard as a farce. When woman gets the same rights and privileges as man she will despise him. Until that time she is dependent upon him."

M. DUMAS' mode of life was simplicity itself. He rose between six and seven, breakfasted off a glass of milk, attended to his letters, had a plain *déjeuner* at noon, worked from one until four, had a two hours' walk, dined at six, played at billiards, and went to bed soon after ten. He wrote quickly, having mentally elaborated all his ideas beforehand. It is said that he wrote the third act of *Héloïse Paraquet* in three hours.

"I INHERITED my dramatic instinct from my father," he often said, "but differed from him in manner. My father was born in a poetic and picturesque epoch; he was an idealist. I came upon a period of materialism; I am a realist. My father took his subject from dreamland; I take mine from life. My father worked with his eyes shut; I work with them open. He withdrew himself from the world; I identify myself with it. He sketched; I photographed. You would search in vain for his models; mine are to be met with everywhere."

SOME, however, did not think him quite so stern a realist as he imagined himself to be. "You have introduced us," said Comte d'Haussonville to him when he was received at the French Academy, "to a world which, I think, does not exist. It is an exceptional world, I am persuaded. For I am convinced that whatever exceptions there may be, such as you have described, with all the witchery of your pen, in the world we live in, honour in man and purity in woman is the ideal to which we all cling and which you yourself unconsciously worship."

"*The Theatre* of London," says the *New York Spirit of the Times*, "is holding a symposium upon the question whether dramatic critics ought to write plays. The same question was raised here by the production of



*Rodion the Student*, dramatised by C. H. Meltzer, at the Garrick Theatre. Suppose we put it in another way, and ask, 'Ought playwrights to write criticisms of their own and other people's plays?' Any man who can do exact and impartial justice to a manager that has refused or accepted his plays; to an actor that has helped to make or mar his plays, and to a dramatist whose plays have been preferred to his, is more than a dramatic critic, more than human, and ought to be at once transferred to heaven to write notices of the performances of the angels."

Is America to rob us of Mr. Willard as well as other distinguished English players? "I hope," Mr. A. M. Palmer lately remarked, "that he will now follow my friendly advice, and become an American actor permanently. He is needed on our stage, and there is a much wider and richer scope for him in this country than there can be in England."

MISS DOROTHEA BAIRD'S engagement to Mr. H. B. Irving is a matter for hearty congratulation on both sides. The good wishes of all their friends will be no less sincere than those of the large public unacquainted with them personally but interested in the representative of *Trilby*, and in the career of a son of the acknowledged head of the dramatic profession in Great Britain.

NOT a few singers, both here and abroad, would do well to think of what M. Gounod said in a book, just translated into English, on *Don Juan*. "Usually," he says, "they care for nothing except hearing the sound of the voice noticed and applauded for itself. They are entirely mistaken as to the function and rôle of the voice. They take the means for the end, the servant for the master. They forget that fundamentally there is but one art—the word, and one function—to express; and that, consequently, a great singer ought to be first of all a great orator, and that is utterly impossible without absolutely truthful accent. When singers, especially on the stage, think only of displaying the voice, they should be reminded that that is a sure and infallible means of falling into monotony. Truth alone has the privilege of infinite and inexhaustible variety."

MR. HENRY HAMILTON has had to endure one of the penalties attached to greatness. One Henry Saunders, hailing from England, has been passing himself off in New York as the English dramatist. Nothing was wanting to the completeness of the imposture—neither good looks, the freshness of youth, an inexhaustible flow of speech, a profound belief in the divine right of kings, a keen sympathy with the Stuart dynasty, nor an undying contempt for Republican institutions. Many who might have been supposed to know something about English dramatic authors were taken in. Mr. Frohmann courteously made him free of the Empire Theatre. He went behind the scenes, and was even allowed, "as the author," to make suggestions as to the performance of Mr. Hamilton's version of *Carmen*. Miss Nethersole, it is said, listened to him with "the deference which legitimate authority inspires." Sir Augustus Harris's agent treated him as seriously as he could have desired. In all quarters, to be brief, he was fêted, flattered, and caressed. He has now been committed for trial on a charge of defrauding a landlady.

MISS CLARA MORRIS relates a pathetic incident. "During a recent engagement in Pittsburg," she says, "I engaged a number of little girls for *Miss Multon*. My heart always goes out to little children, and I long to make them feel at home. So I approached one little girl at rehearsal, and asked her where her mother was. She answered, 'Mozzer's in a box.' After looking for her mother in the various boxes, I said, 'Why, no, dear, your

mother's not in a box.' 'Yes, see is!' whimpered the poor little waif. Thereupon I inspected the boxes again, but with the same result. 'Why, no, child, you are mistaken.' 'No, she ain't!' answered her companion. 'Her mother's dead. She was buried day before yesterday.' It made me cry like a baby, and I made it my business before leaving Pittsburg to see that that poor little waif was properly taken care of."

MR. T. H. BOLTON, long a good friend to the theatrical profession, has been made Taxing Master in the High Court. He will, therefore, retire from practice as a solicitor, and will probably sever his connection in that way with the Actors' Association. If he does, he might well be succeeded by Mr. Thomas Marriott, whose article in *The Theatre* last May so thoroughly exploded the old notion that in the eye of the law the player is a "rogue and vagabond."

MR. JULIAN MAGNUS, in a recent interview, expressed a belief that Madame Calvé should appear in tragedy. "I think," he said, "that Calvé could play Lady Macbeth, and I told her so last winter on meeting her in Boston. 'Ladee Macbeth,' said Calvé, puzzled, 'wota you mean by Ladee Macbeth? I nevaire meet her; was she Ecnglish?' I explained that Lady Macbeth was a favourite character of Shakspeare's. She said that she had heard of Shakspeare, and had seen *Hamlet* at the Comédie Française. It's funny about Calvé. Maurice Grau, of the firm of Abbey and Grau, is a man of fine art instinct, and on him devolves the work of choosing the artists for the Abbey-Grau attractions. Abbey heard Calvé sing in Paris, and was enchanted with her. He wanted Grau to engage her. Grau criticised her technique and her art. 'Hang her technique and her art. She's magnetic; she's great,' insisted Abbey. And Calvé was engaged, and was the real clean cut, unadulterated triumph of the Abbey-Grau season. I want to see her in tragedy."

TELEGRAMS from New York state that *Michael and His Lost Angel* has been produced at the Empire Theatre without success.

MISS PAUNCEFORT (Mrs. Cooke), who died on December 19, at the age of seventy, was an actress of no ordinary gifts and accomplishments. Her experience of the stage was long and varied. Beginning in a small way, she attracted notice a little more than thirty years ago by her acting at the Surrey Theatre, then held by Mr. Shepherd and Mr. Creswick, in tragedy and melodrama. In 1870, at the Queen's Theatre, she was Queen Mary in *Twixt Axe and Crown*. Not long afterwards she migrated to the Lyceum, where she supported Sir Henry Irving as Catherine in *The Bells*, Lady Eleanor in *Charles I.*, Marion Delorme in *Richelieu*, the Comtesse de Miraflore in *Philip*, the Queen in *Hamlet* (during the famous two hundred nights' run of the tragedy), Hecate in *Macbeth*, the Widow Melnotte in the *Lady of Lyons*, Madame dei Franchi in *The Corsican Brothers*, Emilia in *Othello*, and other characters. Failing health compelled her to retire a few years ago. Sir Henry Irving always showed deep admiration and respect for his old playfellow, who held him in nothing less than veneration, and over whose grave a beautiful wreath was placed in his name. His Christmas in Philadelphia was not untinged with sadness.

SOME months ago we had occasion to protest strongly in these pages against the five o'clock performances which Mr. Waller and Mr. Morell, attempted to bring into favour at the Haymarket Theatre. "To expect a company of artists," we said, "to begin their duties at four o'clock and to work practically until midnight is not giving them a fair chance." We

might have added that the system operated with equal unfairness as regarded the second audience, the players being tired already by the exertions they had just gone through. What, then, can we say of the latest experiment of these same managers, which consists in giving a day performance at Manchester, and hurrying back to London—a journey of nearly two hundred miles—to appear as usual in the evening at their theatre in Shaftesbury-avenue? Such an innovation cannot be too strongly condemned, apart from the injustice and cruelty to the artists. London playgoers have every ground for vigorous protest against this system being allowed to take root. It is positively wrong to offer to an audience a piece performed by actors and actresses who have within less than twenty-four hours travelled close on four hundred miles, concluded their afternoon performance only just in time to hurry to the train, and gone without the rest and recreation which alone can fit them to put forth their best work.

THE new Gilbert and Sullivan opera being now in rehearsal at the Savoy the run of *The Mikado* is within measurable distance of its close. Frau Ilka Palmay, who is to be Mr. D'Oyly Carte's new *prima donna*, is a Hungarian, and a great favourite both in her own country and elsewhere.

THE successor to *The Late Mr. Castello*, which is doing very well at present, is to be Mr. Clyde Fitch's *Gossip*, which Mrs. Langtry produced some little time ago, and which has been seen in the provinces as well as in America. For this Mrs. Langtry will join Mr. Comyns Carr's company.

MR. CARTON has two new plays in hand.

It is understood that Mr. Augustin Daly is intent upon yet another mutilation of Shakspeare. This time it is to be a jumbling together of the two parts of *Henry IV.*, with Miss Rehan as the Prince of Wales.

AFTER nearly six years' absence from the London stage, the Carl Rosa Opera Company made a welcome re-appearance at Daly's Theatre on Monday, January 20. Unfortunately the season had to be restricted to a series of *matinée* performances, there being no suitable theatre available in the evening for so long a period as a month. This may have been convenient for the suburban opera lover, but it was decidedly disappointing to a large proportion of the admirers and supporters of the company.

THE death of Mrs. Stephens, which occurred last month, severed another link between the theatrical present and the theatrical past, and caused sincere regret to all who had known this admirable old actress. Her career began in the early 'forties, and in *The Ticket-of-Leave Man*, produced in 1863, she was the original Mrs. Willoughby, the character with which her name has always been associated. She made her final appearance in 1889, at the Shaftesbury Theatre, then under the management of Mr. Willard, whose affectionate regard for her did so much to brighten her old age.

THE wave of patriotic enthusiasm that swept over us last month appealed with equal force to actors as to other members of the community. Indeed, to judge from the numerous references to the crisis which were introduced into various pieces running in London, the dramatic and musical professions would seem to be particularly ebullient in their forcible expressions of loyalty and martial ardour. And "An Actor" has even suggested in a letter to the Press that he and his fellows should at once band together in a solid phalanx in order to be able to strike a shrewd blow for their country whenever an appeal to arms shall be made. He pointed out that, being occupied only at night, they would have plenty of time for drill and exercise, which is true enough when there are no rehearsals to be



attended. But his suggestion that actors would have special advantages for acquiring military skill because they are sometimes required to handle weapons on the stage, must be meant for a joke. The manner in which weapons are handled and combats conducted in theatres suggests, as a rule that in anything but a very sham fight the combatants would come off badly indeed.

MR. ARTHUR BOURCHIER, having done so well with an adaptation of a Parisian success, has now gone to Berlin for a piece to be turned into an English farce. His version of a play that has held the boards for some months at one house was produced for copyright purposes the other day at the Royalty Theatre. It is not likely to be wanted yet awhile, however, for *The Chili Widow* is still attracting large audiences, and after that will probably come Mr. Robert Buchanan's piece, to which the Censor has now withdrawn his objection. Mr. Zangwill's much-talked-of comedy is not likely to be produced at this theatre after all, though we hope it may soon see the light somewhere else.

WE much regret to learn that Miss Rose Norreys, whose mind, it was hoped, had been freed from its painful delusions, has suffered a serious relapse, and is again obliged to be placed under control. She is now in a private asylum, where she is well looked after, thanks in a large degree to the generous and kindly thought of Mr. Edward Ledger.

MR. KERR, reappearing at Terry's on Boxing Day, after a brief absence, was presented by the members of his company with an inscribed silver bowl in commemoration of the two hundredth performance of *Miss Brown*.

MR. EDWARD TERRY has accepted, and will produce before long, probably first in the country, a new and original play—a comedy in three acts—by Mr. Louis N. Parker and Mr. E. J. Goodman, the title of which is not yet settled. The chief character is one that, familiar as it is to everybody, has not yet supplied a part to any actor, and it is one of which Mr. Terry thinks he can make something. Mr. Goodman, Mr. Parker's new collaborator, is known chiefly as a writer of novels and books of travel in Norway; but some years ago the late Richard Younge produced a play of his, called *Seeing the World*, with considerable success, and also a one-act piece on the bygone "lady help" question.

MANY persons have been asking of late what has become of Miss Bessie Hatton. The question may be answered by the fact that she has just issued a collection of graceful fairy tales. It is entitled *The Village of Youth*, and has illustrations by Mr. Margetson. Is Miss Hatton giving up to literature what was meant for the stage? Either way she can only be successful.

COMPREHENSIVE as it usually is, *The Dictionary of National Biography*, like the ninth edition of *The Encyclopædia Britannica*, has sins of omission to answer for in regard to the stage. In the last volume, for instance, we find nothing about Mr. E. F. S. Pigott, the Examiner of Plays. Mr. Sidney Lee, the editor, would do well to have more frequent recourse to Mr. Joseph Knight, the author of so many up-to-date biographies in the same work of dramatists, players, and other persons associated with the theatre.

By the 1st of January all danger of a war between Great Britain and the United States was at an end. The Lotos Club of New York and the Savage Club of London exchanged Happy New Year messages. After that, of course, continued peace between the two nations became a moral



certainly, much to the relief of Sir Henry Irving, Miss Terry, Mr. Hare, and other English players in America.

WAS Shakspeare a musician? Lecturing at the Bishopsgate Institute the other day, Professor Bridge, organist of Westminster Abbey, answered this question in the affirmative. He drew attention to some of the most interesting allusions made in Shakspeare's plays to musical instruments and music, and quoted several extracts to show that the poet possessed a considerable knowledge of the theory of music. The lecturer also gave a number of musical illustrations, including several settings printed and sung in Shakspeare's lifetime. Among these were "Oh, Mistress Mine," from *Twelfth Night*; "It was a Lover and his Lass," from *As You Like It*; and "Oh, willow, willow," adapted as Desdemona's song in *Othello*, from a manuscript of Shakspeare's time.

CURIOSLY interesting are the theatre advertisements in the first number of the *Daily News*, reprinted by the proprietors of that journal on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of its birthday, January 21, 1846. The playhouses whose performances are announced number six—Drury Lane, the St. James's, the Adelphi, the Lyceum, the Haymarket, and the Princess's. And here comes in the best part of it. At each of the last four one of the pieces in the bill was *The Cricket on the Hearth*. The explanation is that Dickens's story, which had just been published as the third of his Christmas tales, was seized upon by all the managers as the most fitting dramatic fare for the holiday season, and probably each version was independently prepared. *Nous avons changé tout cela* since then. Mr. Tree would not at all like *Trilby*, for instance, to be played at several other theatres besides his own. The names of the performers at the various houses include those of Miss Woolgar, Mr. W. Farren, Mr. and Mrs. Keeley, Mr. Compton, Mrs. Stirling, Mr. Wright, and Mr. Buckstone. The two comedians last-named played Tilly Slowboy at the Adelphi and the Haymarket respectively. What a cast might have been made up had any manager been able to secure the combined services of all these famous artists at once.

AT Drury Lane *Maritana* was separated from the "new Christmas comic pantomime called *Harlequin Gulliver, or Giants and Dwarfs*" by the performances of "Professor Risley and his sons," whatever they may have been. At the St. James's a season of French plays was in progress, with M. Laferrière, of the Paris Vaudeville, and Madame Albert as the bright particular stars of the stock company. None of the pieces played at any of the theatres, save those mentioned, seem to have had any lasting qualities, for they are never even heard of nowadays. But, then, how many of the plays running in this year of grace 1896 will be known even by name to the playgoers of 1946? The sort of humour that passed current half-a-century ago may be judged from the title of the after-piece at the Adelphi, *Harlequin and Poonoowingkeewanyftibeedeestobeedeebuskeebung, or the King of the Cannibal Islands*.

MR. ADAIR FITZ-GERALD writes to us:—"In reply to your query respecting a certain quatrain quoted from the book of words of the *Bric-à-Brac Will*, I wish to state that they were printed therein through a misunderstanding. But they were not sung, as the *Stage* of November 1st was good enough to point out. It does not seem fair to me that a critic should rely upon a book of words for his information of what he has heard sung. In this case the words were not sung, but others suitable and appropriate were given in their place. I think, too, that I should add that nearly every song, duct,

and chorus in the piece was written by me to music already composed—no easy task—and perhaps this will explain why some of the numbers were not so smooth as they might have been.” But Mr. Fitz-Gerald omits to say how it was that he allowed verses not his own to be printed in a book bearing his name.

IN aid of the funds of Guy’s Hospital, the Anomalies Dramatic Club gave an exceedingly creditable performance at St. George’s Hall, on January 11, of *A Pair of Spectacles*.

THE new theatre at Cambridge, just opened by Mr. Beerbohm Tree, at last provides for the drama in the University town that fitting home for which it has waited so long. With room for an audience of 1,400, every one of whom will be able to see without let or hindrance the whole of the stage, with a pleasing scheme of decoration and plenty of room everywhere behind as well as before the curtain, the house is certain to attract town and gown in large numbers, if only the plays performed are chosen with as much care as has been spent on making it thoroughly safe and thoroughly, comfortable.

MR. F. R. BENSON unveiled the memorial stone of the New Grand Opera House, Belfast, in December. He was surrounded by a distinguished assembly, presided over by Captain McCalmont, M.P. Mr. Warden, the lessee, sprang a surprise on the company by asking Mr. Benson’s acceptance of a valuable breast-pin, given him by Macready on his retirement.

AN amusing incident occurred at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin, during one of Mr. Tree’s representations last year of *Hamlet*. Mr. Maurice, kneeling at the *prie-dieu* as the King, whispered to a scene-shifter within two feet of him at the wings, “Tell me when Hamlet goes off—I cannot see.” Hamlet went off in due course, and the house was electrified by hearing the scene-shifter exclaim, at the top of his voice, “He’s off, Sur !”

*Roughing It on the Stage* is the title of a little volume by Mr. Leopold Wagner, just published. It is dedicated, “To the Stage-struck,” and certainly, if we are to take all that is set down for gospel, it is an appropriate offering. It consists mainly of an account, mostly humorous, of the author’s early struggles in the profession ; but, from the presence of one or two stories not absolutely unknown to fame, we should be inclined to think that the incidents are, to say the least, “coloured.”

FROM Paris we learn that the rehearsals of *Grosse Fortune*, M. Henri Meilhac’s comedy, have begun at the Comédie Française, M. Raphaël Duflos undertaking the part originally intended for M. Truffier. *Manon Roland*, a drama in verse by MM. Bergerat and Sainte-Croix, has been accepted at the same theatre. The chief burden in this piece will be borne by Mlle. Bartet, supported by Madame Pierson and M. Coquelin the younger. M. Delaunay’s son, M. Louis Delaunay, is about to enter the Maison de Molière. Mlle. Marsy, of the Comédie Française, has, for reasons not at present very clear, given in her resignation, though only to find that the committee refuse to accept it. Indeed, they threaten to apply to her the twenty-fifth section of the Moscow decree.

It is expected that the Comédie Française will produce this year M. Aicard’s translation of *Othello*, in a fragment of which Madame Bernhardt and M. Mounet-Sully appeared a few years ago.

M. CLARETIE has issued an order that ladies shall not wear hats in the stalls of the Comédie Française. In this he has long been anticipated by

English managers, but the custom against which he sets his face still prevails in America.

M. FAURE, dealing with the French fine arts budget, asks that the number of performances of foreign works at the Opéra should be restricted, so as to prevent French money from going into the pockets of foreign composers. But, as the *Temps* points out, the Opéra is obliged to give foreign works because they pay better, as the returns abundantly prove.

FRIDAY is no longer a fashionable night at the Paris Opéra, the *mondaines* having, for what reason is not exactly known, made Monday the special night of the week.

M. MONTEGUT, the translator into French of Shakspeare, as of Macaulay's *History*, died suddenly in December, at the age of seventy.

M. VALABRÉGUE, the author of *Durand et Durand* and other amusing pieces, is starting an association in Paris whose duty it will be to collect fees due to French playwrights, on account of foreign representations of their works, and particularly of representations in England and America. The Society of Dramatic Authors, of which M. Sardou is president, already does this for its members, so it is a little difficult to see any necessity for the new society's existence. Fifteen or twenty years ago it might have been of decided service to French dramatists, but nowadays it is they who adapt English plays, while the importation of French pieces into this country, though it still, of course, goes on, has been on the wane for some years past.

M. SERPETTE has composed for the Opéra Comique a piece in three acts' the *Ordre de l'Empereur*, on a "book" supplied by M. Paul Ferrier.

SIGNORA DUSE, ever successful, appeared in December at Copenhagen. whence she goes to Stockholm. She is expected to return to the Danish capital before long.

SIR ARTHUR SULLIVAN, during his recent stay at Munich, was entertained by a number of artists and journalists at his hotel, the Bristol. Just before the company sat down Signor Mascagni happened to arrive. He was forthwith included in the company, and the scene became one of *courtoise expansion*. Signor Mascagni drunk to the success of *Ivanhoe*, and Sir Arthur paid a warm tribute to the merits of *Ratcliff*.

NOTHING like beer, especially as a means of making money. Herr Siegfried Wagner, the great composer's son, is to be married this spring to the daughter of a Munich brewer.

At the Stadt Theater in Cologne, Bruch's four-act romantic opera *Die Loreley*, which had not been performed in any theatre for thirty years, has just been revived. The libretto is based on Giebel's text, which Mendelssohn, in 1847, had the intention of setting to music. He did, indeed, use it for the famous *Loreley finale*, the Ave Maria, and the Winzer Chorus. Bruch's musical interpretation of the poetical and beautiful, but not very dramatic libretto, often reminds one of Weber, of whose originality and fancy the composer, then only twenty-four years of age, possessed as yet no trace.

SIGNOR MASCAGNI, not content with his laurels as a composer, has written a farce on a subject drawn from theatrical life.

THE *Official Gazette* of Madrid lately contained an announcement which to Englishmen may have an odd sound. It was to the effect that the Queen Regent, in the name of Alphonse XIII., gave her consent to a marriage



between Don Fernando Diaz de Mendoza (eldest son of the Marquis de Fortunas), and Senora Guerrero, the actress. The husband has now taken to the stage as a *jeune premier* at the Teatro Espagnol, where the bride distinguished herself not long ago by her support of Madame Bernhardt.

FOUNDATION Day was observed at the Players' Club, New York, by the customary supper on New Year's Eve. Mr. Jefferson, the president, took the chair. One of the speakers was Bishop Potter, who paid a warm tribute to Edwin Booth. Mr. Jefferson presented the club with a painting of Sir Henry Irving as Becket, and Sir Henry sent from Philadelphia a silver pitcher and salver in honour of the celebration.

THE Philadelphia Arts Club entertained Sir Henry Irving at supper on the night of January 2.

MR. CHANDOS FULTON, meeting Sir Henry Irving at a social function in New York, got into difficulties over the newly-conferred title. "Mr Irving—I beg pardon, Sir Henry," he repeatedly said. "If you persist in betitling me," the English actor at last said, with what the *Spirit* calls his 'sweet and mysterious' smile, "I shall have to address you as the Duke of Buckingham—and Chandos."

MR. LACKAYE, so successful in America as Svengali, was originally intended for the priesthood, but was fired by a performance of *Esmeralda* at the Madison Square Theatre with the desire to go on the stage. His father suggested that a padded cell was better suited to a youth who could change his mind in a night as to a profession. However, he was not to be diverted from his resolution, and from that time to the present has made continuous progress as a character actor.

THE box-office receipts of Mr. Richard Mansfield at Washington the other day were attached in a suit brought by a Mrs. Mary Sanders for 1300 dollars, said to be due on an unfulfilled contract, under which she was to act in his company.

M. VICTOR CAPOUL, liking to revisit a scene of former triumphs, is making a brief stay in New York, where he has been asked, with what result is not yet known, to open a class for advanced vocal students.

SIR HENRY IRVING AND MISS TERRY found time on January 2 to give a performance in Philadelphia in aid of the Jefferson Maternity, the pieces represented being *Journey's End* in *Lovers Meeting* and *A Story of Waterloo*. The programme had two new and excellent portraits of the principal players.

MADAME MODJESKA opened a successful engagement at the Boston Theatre on December 30, playing Marie Stuart.

AN American manager has lit upon the idea of giving a free pass to the gentleman who accompanies a "young" lady to a *matinee* if she has paid for her seat. But it remains to be seen whether this ingenious arrangement will answer its purpose. How is the line on the point of age to be drawn?

MR. J. E. DODSON's eminence as a character actor has again been attested in America. He has been asked by a prominent theatrical manager to lead a combination there next season, but has thought fit—at least for the present—to decline the offer.

THE Title Page and Index for the current volume of *The Theatre* is now ready, and may be had of the publishers, price 2d.



"THE THEATRE," MARCH, 1896.



*Photographed by Barraud, Ltd., Liverpool.*

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MISS MAUD JEFFRIES  
*IN THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.*



# THE THEATRE.

MARCH, 1896.

## Our Watch Tower.

### AN ACTOR'S PET AFFECTATION.



THE evidence given in a recent theatrical case, which ended, as do so many similar cases, in smoke, was conflicting enough to be very bewildering as regards several of the points at issue. It left us in a state of painful uncertainty as to the relative importance of "boy" and "girl" in pantomime, and the degree of artistic degradation which would be suffered by an actress from the music-halls if she were to be cast for the rôle of the sweetheart allotted by stage tradition to Robinson Crusoe. It did not even settle satisfactorily whether the author of a pantomime "book" had or had not received full justice in the interpretation secured for the subtle characteristics of his heroine. But if these momentous questions remained unsolved, by reason of the contradictory nature of the experts' testimony, one thing at all events was proved beyond the possibility of doubt. This was the survival of the superstition which forbids actors and actresses to admit that they ever read dramatic criticism. That superstition is evidently as rife as ever. Some people may call it by a harsher name; for ourselves, we prefer to regard it as a kind of social convention akin to that which compels learned judges when on the bench to profess utter ignorance of anything that is not law, and of anyone who is not a lawyer. It always suggests to us the formula of the man who, in answering a newspaper attack, invariably thinks fit to pretend that he would never have seen it had not his "attention been called" to the offending organ. Of course, it is not to be seriously supposed that actors, as a class, do not read the papers. In most cases they include reading amongst their accomplishments, and in many they have pence wherewith to buy an occasional journal or to share in the purchase of a weekly review. Nor is it, we think, quite conceivable that, having bought a paper or joined in a syndicate for the purchase of an *Era*, the average actor will deliberately ignore that portion of its contents which professionally concerns him

most nearly. The politician does not generally ignore the parliamentary reports in his *Times*, and the stockbroker seldom puts down his *Standard* without a fleeting glance at its money article. How, then, can it be imagined that the stage player passes over any reference to plays which may be made in his *Daily Telegraph* or his *Daily News*? For him to do so, through a philosophical determination not to run the chance of being ruffled by adverse comment, would be to display a phenomenal strength of mind hardly to be accounted for even by his possession of what is vaguely known as the artistic temperament. To assume, as the only remaining hypothesis, that his omission was due to lack of interest in the subject, would be to credit him with even less of intelligence than is allowed to him by his harshest detractors. No; look at it which way we will, we find this pet theory of the actor's quite untenable. Consciously or unconsciously, he reads, we are sure, the "notices" which he professes to despise and ignore; and we would not do him the injustice to believe him on his oath when he says he does not, any more than we would wrong a pretty woman's taste by believing her statement that she never looked in the glass.

Why is it, we ask, that this convention of utter indifference to critical comment should obtain with the very class of artists in whom, by reason of their necessarily sympathetic nature, their love of approbation, their harmless vanity and self-esteem, its existence would seem most unlikely? More directly, perhaps, than the follower of any other calling, the actor lives upon the appreciation of his contemporaries, an appreciation which must be immediate and unmistakable if he is to obtain a satisfactory livelihood. Now, apart from the rounds of applause which die away into silence, leaving no record save an echo behind them, the columns of the press afford practically the only means whereby this appreciation can find public expression. There is the test of the box-office, of course—that ordeal by commerce from which there is no effective appeal. But this is a test chiefly applicable to pieces and productions as a whole, and seldom available for individual performances. At its very best, a piece of acting makes a mark less enduring than that left by any parallel development of art; and this consideration has, we know, often weighed heavily with those who would fain place acting, as an art, on a level with painting, sculpture, and music. However admirable the description, we cannot realise from it the effect of a dead tragedian's power or a bygone actress's charm; and we do not suppose that any dramatic critic—unless, perhaps, it be Charles Lamb—has ever succeeded in rousing in the reader the same emotion as that which the comedian of whom he writes used to

stir in the spectator. But if this be true, even in the case of the most-discussed actor and actress, how would it be in the case of the player who was not discussed at all? Perhaps the answer to this would be that it did not much matter, and that the actor acted for his contemporaries and not for posterity. But even as regards the present generation of playgoers, he does not, in nine cases out of ten, get known, either favourably or otherwise, except by the aid of dramatic criticism. In the tenth instance, no doubt, he will take the theatre-going town by storm, without the aid of a single enthusiastic line in a single newspaper. The rumour of his artistic triumph will spread spontaneously, as rumours do, on the wings of the wind, and before anyone quite knows how or why, everyone will be talking of it in club and drawing-room and omnibus. This, however, is the rare exception; and not even the most conceited of performers would expect to find it the rule. Generally speaking, the acting which commands no critical comment commands very little else; so that the actor, if there be any, who "never reads notices," avoids the chief means by which to determine his advance in his profession. It is just the same with the manager, though upon a larger scale, since he is risking not only professional reputation but a good deal of capital—either his own or other people's—upon each successive undertaking. He also, we know, sometimes asserts in the witness-box and elsewhere that he "pays no attention to dramatic criticism;" but this familiar utterance is obviously a mere shibboleth of his craft. We have heard him give it within three months of advertising half-a-column of favourable critiques, and we have felt sure that he was merely making a concession to some mysterious demand of the etiquette of the stage.

Once more, then, we ask what is the reason for this favourite affectation, which scarcely seems intended to deceive even the least sophisticated of spectators? Some would, no doubt, account for it by a reference to the accepted differences of opinion—to put it mildly—which have existed for all time between the critics and the criticised. According to this theory, the manager sends the newspaper editor his first-night stall only under protest, or, where the critic prefers paying for his seat, murmurs under his breath, *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*, or more homely words to the same effect. The actor, too, is supposed to cherish a kind of racial hatred for the journalist, even when the circumstances of thoughtless hospitality compel them to meet over the supper-table and to make the best of a bad business by exchanging items of news for promises of paragraphs in advance; while the actress is pictured as recognising her natural foe in the pressman whom



she entertains at tea and tattle. The feeling, in fact, of the players for the press is presumed to be identical with that formulated in the bitter Byronic couplets—

“A man must serve his time to every trade  
Save censure—critics all are ready made”

and

“Care not for feeling, pass your proper jest,  
And stand a critic—hated yet caressed,”

whilst the imaginary revolt against critical tyranny might most fitly be described in those other nervous lines from the same pen—

“And shall we own such judgment? No, as soon  
Seek roses in December, ice in June;  
Hope constancy in wind or corn in chaff,  
Believe a woman—or an epitaph,  
Or any other thing that’s false, before  
You trust in critics.”

For our own part, however, we do not the least believe in any antipathy of this kind between the actor and the dramatic critic as the cause of the former’s assumed indifference to the work of the latter. The actors are in their heart of hearts very fond of the critics, regarding them sensibly enough as the most useful of their friends. When an actor has, or thinks he has, reason to complain of unkindly criticism, and ventures to remonstrate accordingly, it is generally quite enough for the critic to reply—as one of them once did in our hearing—“My dear fellow, you acted as well as you could, and I didn’t like it; I wrote of you as well as I could, and you didn’t like it—so honours are easy!” The friendly understanding between actors and critics generally leaves, we think, very little to be desired. It must in our opinion be a desire to preserve and promote this understanding which prompts the actor to profess complete ignorance of all that the critic has written. He is probably perfectly conscious that neither his immediate listener nor the world at large is for a moment likely to be taken in by the amiable subterfuge. But he regards it as an evidence of superior breeding or “good form,” and he clings to it accordingly, just as he might, if he were a Spanish courtier, to the theory that the Queen of Spain has no legs. To the dramatic critic, whose *amour propre* is probably not very keen, and whose calling is likely to have engendered philosophic indifference, the convention may frequently be far from unwelcome. But in the interests of the manager, the actor, and the actress, it is a fashion which may, we think, be easily carried too far, and may bring ridicule upon those whose ignorance of contemporary criticism is assumed with so benevolent an object and at so great a self-sacrifice.



## Portraits.

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MR. WILSON BARRETT AND MISS MAUD JEFFRIES  
IN *THE SIGN OF THE CROSS*.

WHATEVER may be the opinions concerning Mr. Wilson Barrett's style and methods entertained by critics, "new" or old, no one can deny that during the thirty-two years of his stage career he has worked exceedingly hard to secure popular favour; and, on personal grounds, no one is likely to regret that, although for some years he seemed to have lost his hold upon London playgoers, his latest venture has brought back to him in full measure his former prosperity and success. *The Sign of the Cross* cannot be considered a great or a fine play, but it suits the taste of a very large section of the public; and even to be able to construct and produce a drama which does no more than this is an achievement for which are needed both experience, widely-gained and well-digested, and a considerable amount of technical skill. And *The Sign of the Cross* may have a good effect in this way. It seems to be admitted that a considerable proportion of those who witness it are people to whom the inside of a theatre is entirely unfamiliar—people who would hitherto have regarded the occupants of the pit of a playhouse as qualifying themselves with absolute certainty for that other pit whose bottomless depths are the eternal habitation of lost souls. Now, if the prejudice of such can be broken down a distinct gain will have accrued to the drama, and in time they may be brought to visit theatres where, though the entertainment may not partake so largely of the nature of a sensational sermon, the lessons of life and manners are pictured with more truth, and with the genuine morality of art rather than with that less respectable surface-morality which usually underlies the workings of melodrama. It is, indeed, a pleasing thought, and one to which many would fain cling, that Mr. Wilson Barrett had some such notion in his mind when he decided to put upon the stage his cleverly-contrived version of the story of the Christian maiden and the Pagan prefect, whose earthly love is by the force of circumstances given a spiritual turn and made an instrument for his conversion to the faith. This, however, belongs to the region of conjecture. What

we actually know of Mr. Wilson Barrett is that he has succeeded in affording entertainment, nearly always of a wholesome and invigorating kind; that as the central figure of such pieces as *The Lights o' London*, *The Silver King*, *Claudian*, and *Hoodman Blind*, he can play with a picturesque and romantic vigour that carries all before it; that he has long shown no little constructive ability as a playwright; and that he has been instrumental in introducing to the English stage at least one great artist in Madame Modjeska, and at least one author who has achieved considerable popularity in Mr. Henry Arthur Jones. Mr. Barrett's tenancy of the Court Theatre (1879-1881) is clearly marked off from his long occupation of the Princess's (1881-1886), the theatre with which his name is generally associated. At the little west-end house melodrama was not thought of. Such pieces as *Courtship*, *The Old Love and the New*, *Heartsease* (an adaptation of *La Dame aux Camélias*), and *Adrienne Lecouvreur*, with a revival of *Romeo and Juliet*, formed the principal attractions. But no sooner had Mr. Barrett at his disposal the large stage of the Oxford-street theatre than he wisely turned his attention to the work for which he was so well fitted, and began in September, 1881, that memorable series of melodramas which, with an interval for *Hamlet* and *Junius*, lasted until his first visit to America in 1886. The end of 1887 found him back in London at the Globe, but before long he was again the tenant of the Princess's, producing in 1888 *Ben-my-Chree*, and in 1889 *Nowadays* and *The Good Old Times*. After another American tour he reopened the New Olympic in 1890, but his tenancy at this house was not very successful, and from 1891 until this year Mr. Barrett has been a stranger to London playgoers, dividing his time between the provinces and the United States. To have him back at the Princess's would gladden the hearts of all lovers of melodrama, and we cannot refrain from expressing the wish that he might see his way to becoming once more the manager of the house when its lease is disposed of at the end of this month. In his own line Mr. Wilson Barrett is unexcelled, and with alternations between judicious revivals—*The Silver King* might well be seen again, and even *Claudian* raise his head once more—and well-constructed new pieces, success should be wooed without much doubt of the result. Of Miss Maud Jeffries there is so little to be said that we must content ourselves with chronicling the fact that she has been Mr. Barrett's chief supporter for some time past, and that she has so far acquitted herself well enough to justify the hope that she may be qualifying herself for more advanced and more exacting parts than she has yet had an opportunity of attempting to fill.

"THE THEATRE," MARCH, 1896.



*Photographed by Barrauds, Ltd., Liverpool.*

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MR. WILSON BARRETT  
*IN THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.*





## The Round Table.

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### MARCHING TO OUR DOOM.

BY SYDNEY GRUNDY.

EVERYBODY who takes an interest in the English theatre must have observed the gradual decline of the serious drama, side by side with the increasing popularity of entertainments that assimilate themselves more and more to the music-hall and the smoking concert. One by one, theatres established for entertainments of the highest class, such as the Prince of Wales's and Daly's, are annexed by the variety shows; and the services of some of our most popular players are diverted from their legitimate employment. The runs of the few serious successes have become shorter and shorter, and the sober drama is rapidly becoming an unmarketable commodity.

That entertainments which appeal to the unthinking and the vulgar should command the greatest popularity is in no wise remarkable; nor is the fact to be deplored. The unthinking and the vulgar must always be the majority; and they are entitled to be amused in their own way. But that there should be no remunerative public for serious artistic endeavour would be a very lamentable state of things. Yet is not that the situation which we are rapidly approaching? I am not speaking of the tragic, romantic, or picturesque drama, but of the serious play of modern life. Avoiding instances over which opinions may well differ, let us consider the last three productions of Mr. Pinero. Mr. Pinero is universally acknowledged, except by Mr. George Bernard Shaw, to be the leading English dramatist of our time; and *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*, and *The Benefit of the Doubt* are perhaps the three most representative serious plays of recent years. Now, what has been their measure of success? With regard to the last two, I fear there is no doubt of which to give them the benefit; such acceptance as they obtained being distinctly traceable to Mr. Pinero's great and well-deserved reputation, and to the popularity of some of those who took part in them. Of the trio, only *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*

was a success. In estimating the degree of that success, we must discriminate between newspaper encomiums, which represent the opinions of journalists, and financial results, which represent, as nearly as we can get at it, the opinion of the public. Even from the latter we must take a substantial discount, for it must be remembered that even the financial results only give us the opinion of the public under the impetus of the opinion of the press; and in the case of so exceptional an artistic sensation as *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, thousands of playgoers must have attended it out of mere curiosity. Bearing in mind that we can arrive only approximately at the opinion of the public, what are the facts? *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* was undoubtedly a great success on its original production, and had a considerable run to magnificent business. If I remember rightly, that run was interrupted by provincial engagements; but, on its resumption, the success was still conspicuous. On its revival, the play attracted no audiences at all. In the country it has been comparatively little played; and in America, I believe, it has only figured in the repertory of Mr. and Mrs. Kendal. Thus we are face to face with the solid fact that, of the three most representative serious English plays of our time, only one has been a success, and even that success has been by no means commensurate with the artistic position which the play has been almost unanimously assigned.

But there is something more—and something eloquent. Though *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* trends boldly in the direction of character analysis, and away from dramatic action, it belongs to a very different order of composition from *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* and *The Benefit of the Doubt*. In all essentials *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* is in the old style of theatrical architecture. It is distinctly “well-made,” and “the long arm of coincidence” is unhesitatingly used to bring about a dramatic situation. In a word, *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* is a play; *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* and *The Benefit of the Doubt* are mere studies of character—and the public would have none of them.

My point is this: that it is the tendency of the contemporary serious drama to become less and less a play and more and more a study of character, and that, in proportion to this tendency, its popularity is declining—and rightly declining—and that our serious theatre is being destroyed by a coterie of enthusiastic eccentrics, who represent nobody’s opinion but their own, and who have no sympathy with the drama or with anything that is dramatic. This clique has gained almost complete ascendancy over our first-night audiences, with the result that their verdicts

March 1, 1896.]

*THE THEATRE.*

are worthless and misleading, and that, under its fanatical escort, we are marching to our doom.

The leaders of this revolution have openly declared that they have nothing whatever to do with finance; that whether a play pays or not is no concern of theirs, and that they never take the commercial aspect of a production into their consideration. In other words, they have admitted that their opinions ought to be dismissed with a smile by every practical man; for a work of art which does not pay is only fit to be enshrined in a museum. It is not a question of taste, but of economics. If you exhibit such works in a theatre, there will very soon be no theatre.

The remedy for this disastrous condition of things is entirely to reorganise our ridiculous first-nights. It is preposterous to go on as we do. The audience to which plays are first submitted long ago ceased to represent public opinion; indeed, its tastes and requirements have so far diverged from the tastes and requirements of the public that, on some points, they are positively in antagonism. Unfortunately, the public has not yet found this out. If the first-nighters decide that a play is not worth seeing, few and far between are the enterprising individuals who will take the trouble to form an independent opinion. And we have no legitimate ground of complaint. The fault is ours, who take enormous pains to make sure that, on a first-night, the public, for whom alone we write, for whom alone we act, by whom alone we live, shall be deliberately and religiously excluded.

See how the system works. An entertainment is prepared, the one and only object of which is to please the public. I dismiss works of so-called art, which are written to please the press, and to obtain that most barren of glory, a newspaper reputation. Having taken immense trouble over this endeavour, we exhibit the result to an audience for which we have not catered, whose taste we have not considered, for whose opinion we don't care two straws! And, practically, we are bound by the verdict. It is advertised far and near, it rolls over the country; it reverberates from America and Australia; and if it is against us, in nine cases out of ten the public never comes near us to judge for itself. Suppose it is in our favour, enthusiastically, insanely—it is generally insane when it is enthusiastic—the libraries do deals, the public flock, stare, yawn. The pit and gallery are speedily deserted, but the poor upper classes are for a few weeks driven into the high-priced seats by the libraries, who, naturally, would like to see their money back. The deals come to an end. Collapse. This is the unvarnished story of many a newspaper triumph. And the public says to itself: "If these are the



successes, great heaven! what must the failures be like?" And some of the failures have been quite interesting.

It will, of course, be argued that the unreserved seats of the theatre are even on a first night open to the public; and in the case of the larger houses, subject to certain reservations, this is true; but the class of play with which I am dealing is invariably presented in houses of moderate dimensions; and on such gala occasions the stalls encroach so largely on the pit as to reduce it to exiguous proportions. Wholesome as is the influence exercised by the unreserved seats, as far as it goes, it is quite over-balanced by the infinitely greater garrulity of the stalls, which overflows into a hundred newspapers, and in the result effectually swamps the opinion of the cheaper parts.

Is it not as plain as the nose on one's face that our first appeal ought to be to the public for whom we cater? Is it not a monstrous and most mischievous policy so to arrange matters as to make it impossible for us to ascertain at first hand the only opinion that is of any value? whilst we go out of our way to invite the presence of the most notorious cranks and egotists—every man with a theory, every woman with a bee in her bonnet, people who represent nobody under the sun but themselves, some of whose ideals and sympathies are not shared by another person alive. And most dictatorial ladies and gentlemen they are, dealing out heaven and hell, and laying down the law as though they were the leaders of a great movement, the apostles of some new evangel; and there is no movement, and the evangel is a chimera which they have evolved out of their own ignorance of stage conditions and requirements. These are the men who pose as lovers of the drama, and honestly believe they are the best friends of the theatre; whilst really they have an innate distaste for everything that is dramatic, and would, if they had their way, reduce the stage to a barren study in psychology. Such men have no business in the theatre. The stage is the last place in the world for the researches of the laboratory. The first duty of the drama is to be dramatic; and when the theatre has ceased to be theatrical it has ceased to exist.

"If," writes the crankiest of all these stove-pipe fanatics, "if you invent a mechanical rabbit, wind it up, and set it running round the room for me, I shall be hugely entertained, no matter how monstrously unsuccessful it may be as a representation of nature; but if you produce a real rabbit which begins running about without being wound up at all, I simply say, 'Why shouldn't it?' and take down my gun." A clumsy metaphor,



convicting the writer, if he correctly represents what he would say and do under the circumstances, of extreme folly, loquacity, cruelty, and cowardice; but I must take the poor trope as I find it in the attenuated type of the *Saturday Review*. Only mechanical rabbits are permissible on the stage; real ones are as inartistic as the pumps of Mr. Vincent Crummles. The skill of the playwright ought to contrive that they shall not be "monstrously unsuccessful as a representation of nature;" but that they shall be a representation, not a reality, is the first condition of his art. The whole business of play-writing and play-acting is the business of simulation. A live rabbit would be a dead play; its place is in the woods, not in the theatre.

Let it not be thought that I am unduly worrying the unfortunate rabbit of the *Saturday* reviewer. He has made no slip of the pen. The logical and inevitable consequence of the triumph of his views, and all such views, would be the introduction of live rabbits, the destruction of theatrical art, and the demolition of the playhouse. I defy this school of surgical demonstrators logically to stop short of the abolition of the acted drama. They cannot seriously contend that the crowded theatre, with its three hours' time limit, with all its paraphernalia of stage, flats, battens, orchestra, and actors, and with its paramount necessity of earning a huge income, is an appropriate place for the elaborate dissection and scientific analysis of character. The thing is absurd on the face of it.

Recent experiences have demonstrated, with quite startling effect, how completely these theorists are out of touch and sympathy with the play-going public. If there were two plays which Mr. Archer hugged to his artistic breast more fondly than other failures, they were *The Divided Way* and *Michael and His Lost Angel*: if there were two plays which the public rejected and repudiated with more emphasis than the rest, they were *The Divided Way* and *Michael and His Lost Angel*. Is it not obvious that the point of view of Mr. Archer and his satellites is not the point of view of the playgoer? Their standpoint is non-human. They regard a play as a mere intellectual exercise; and its broad meaning, its appeal to the emotions and the sympathies of a mixed audience, they leave entirely out of account. They stand to the average playgoer in the same relation as a Scandinavian stove to an honest, open, cheerful English hearth, as a vegetarian to a man who puts his teeth to the use for which Nature intended them, as a teetotaler to him who uses a little wine for his stomach's sake, as Jaeger's patent wool fabrics to the tweeds and cashmeres of the man in the street; and with one accord they ignore the only test of a successful

performance—its power to hold the attention and interest of the public.

Nobody appreciates more keenly than I do the ability of these iconoclasts. Nobody acknowledges more heartily that there is a truth at the back of their philosophy; but it isn't the whole truth, and they push it to an impracticable extreme. What is the matter with them is that they are not dramatists, and have no sympathy with dramatists. They are essentially men of letters, students, scholars; they look at everything from the point of view of the library, the cloister, the academy. If they will analyse their own temperaments, they will find that they have a certain antipathy to the corporeal theatre, and a violent repugnance to an audience. Plays ought to be read, not acted; the actors are a superfluous and distorting medium. Audiences are a jarring note; the public is an egregious ass; and money is an immoral consideration.

Sad to say, they have made a convert of Mr. Pinero. My dear Pinero, make no mistake. Whatever these men say, the only opinion worth regarding is the opinion of the public. These individuals are only part of the public, and a part is less than the whole. If the public is thoughtless and vulgar, then thoughtlessness and vulgarity are the factors of the problem which we have to solve. If the public says, we will not take seats to watch the laborious analysis of character in the theatre, the laborious analysis of character must return to the novel from which it came. The matter is too serious for mincing words and considerations of conventional good taste. Our business is being destroyed before our eyes. I tell you what I suspect you are beginning to discover—these fawning first-nighters have no following; these fulsome newspapers represent nobody's opinion outside a newspaper office. You are superior to the newspapers. Don't listen to them, but make them listen to you. If need be, fill your ears with wax, and bind yourself to the mast; but steer your own course, not theirs. You will lose nothing; they will soon return to your heel. You will gain everything; for the public you have lost you will find again.

As for you managers, your course is clear. Burn that first-night list. When you announce a new play, open your box-office—open it properly—to the public which pays its money, and give it the article it wants. Don't emulate the British shopkeeper, whose habit it is, and ever has been, not to sell what his customers want to buy, but to make his customers buy what he chooses to sell. And not only will our trade revive, but our art will revive with our trade. Pour out of your doors that stream of printer's ink, and in its place set human flesh and blood. If

you don't, you will cease to exist; the few remaining theatres devoted to serious art will be turned into music-halls, and the life-work of the cranks will be accomplished.

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## AN ORIGINAL PORTRAIT OF SHAKSPERE.

BY T. EDGAR PEMBERTON.

"Look here, upon this picture, and on this."—*Hamlet*.

WRITING nearly a hundred years ago, Steevens said:—"All that is known with any degree of certainty concerning Shakspeare is that he was born in Stratford-upon-Avon, married and had children there, went to London, where he commenced as actor, and wrote poems and plays, returned to Stratford, made his will, died, and was buried." At the time when it was written, this was, no doubt, fairly true; but though we shall always be incurious ignorance concerning the life of England's greatest genius, we are to-day, thanks to the zeal and enthusiasm of those who understand and love his works, possessed of a goodly store of information throwing light upon the poet's home and surroundings. In striking evidence of this is the Stratford-upon-Avon of to-day; and of priceless interest are the carefully arranged and tenderly guarded collections to be seen there. Of course, among Shakspearean enthusiasts a great deal of nonsense has been talked and written, and when we look into the whole matter Charles Dickens's Mr. Curdle frequently comes to the front—the Mr. Curdle who "had written a pamphlet of sixty-four pages post octavo on the character of the Nurse's deceased husband in *Romeo and Juliet*, with an inquiry whether he had really been 'a merry man' in his lifetime, or whether it was merely his widow's affectionate partiality that induced her so to report him. He had likewise proved that, by altering the received mode of punctuation, any one of Shakspeare's plays could be made quite different, and the sense completely changed. It is needless to say, therefore, that he was a great critic, and a very profound and most original thinker." All England over Mr. Curdle is in evidence, but the cream of the Shakspearean researches has come to the surface. For the most part it is stored at Stratford-upon-Avon, and it is not only appetising but in a great measure satisfying.

Concerning the portraits of Shakspeare there has been high controversy; and only one, that of the bust in the church, has escaped censure. As the late Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps points out, this is beyond the reach of the doubt that attaches to the



portraits, and is in no way assailable to hesitating criticism. Sir Francis Chantrey and other eminent sculptors have expressed their belief that it was worked from a cast from life, or perhaps death. Undoubtedly it was an "In Memoriam" from his son-in-law, Dr. Hall, and his personal friends, and it would not have been passed by them until they were well satisfied with the fidelity of the likeness. But how little Shakspeare and his resting-place were thought of in the years that succeeded his death is shown by the fact that Dugdale, in his famous *Antiquities of Warwickshire*, 1656, gives a bad print of the monument, and blandly remarks that the poet was "famous," and thus entitled to such distinction. Actors and actresses may be proud of the fact that in 1748 John Ward, the Irish actor-manager, who had the honour of introducing Peg Woffington to the public, and who was the grandfather of Sarah Siddons and John Philip Kemble, caused Shakspeare's monument to be "repaired" and its colours preserved out of the profits of a representation of *Othello*. In comparison with the bust, the portraits of Shakspeare in oils cannot hold their own. The most important among them are the Chandos portrait, which is presumed to be the work of Richard Burbage, the Felton, and the Jonson portraits. They are all interesting, but it cannot be said that any one of them is convincing, and with lapse of time they have receded in public estimation. The Stratford portrait, which adorns the birthplace, is naively spoken of as a trustworthy portrait, inasmuch as it resembles the bust in the church. But there remains one from which there is no getting away, and that is the engraving by Martin Droeshout, which is to be seen in the first folio of Shakspeare's works, published in 1623. Of this Ben Jonson wrote:—

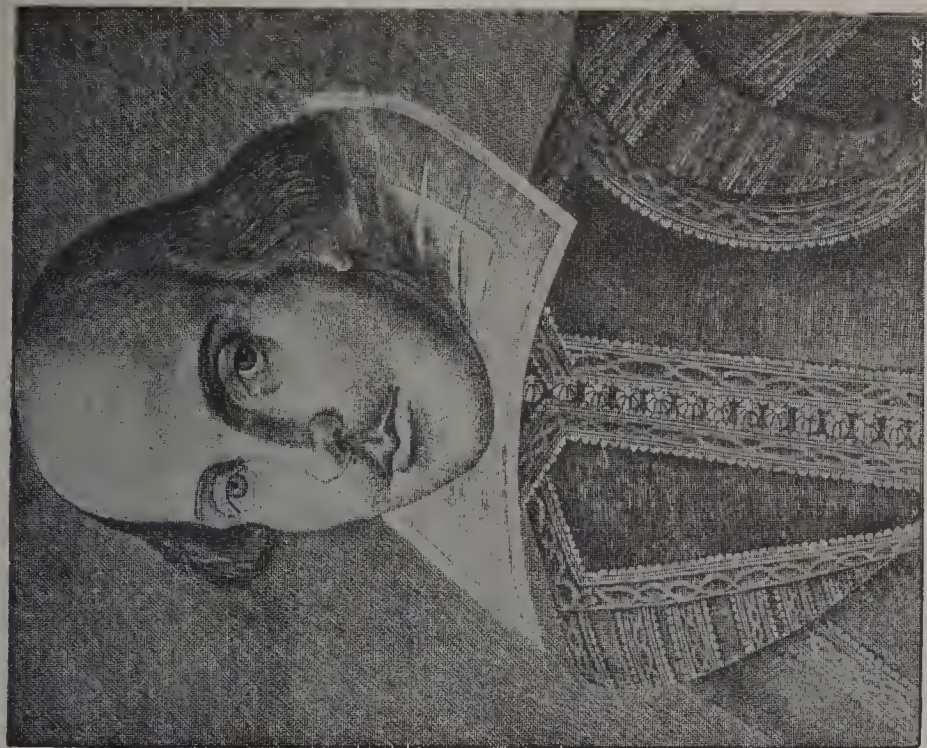
"This figure that thou here seest put  
 It was for gentle Shakspeare cut;  
 Wherein the graver had a strife  
 With nature to outdo the life.  
 O, could he but have drawn his wit,  
 As well in brass, as he hath hit  
 His face, the print would then surpass  
 All that was ever writ in brass;  
 But since he cannot, reader, look,  
 Not on his picture, but his book."

That the likeness is a pleasing one no one will contend. Of it Steevens wrote:—"Shakspeare's countenance, deformed by Droeshout, resembles the sign of Sir Roger de Coverley when it had changed into a Saracen's head; on which occasion the *Spectator* observes that the features of the gentle knight were still apparent through the lineaments of the ferocious Mussulman." It must not be forgotten, however, that Steevens held a





THE ORIGINAL PORTRAIT.



THE DROESHOUT PORTRAIT.



brief on behalf of the Felton picture, which certainly more closely resembles the bust than the Droeshout achievement. Few will be inclined to agree with the usually accurate Halliwell-Phillipps when he oddly enough says that the Droeshout portrait follows the bust, and that there is a general resemblance between them. Upon such points as these opinions are sure to differ, but upon one all must agree, and that is that Droeshout must have taken the portrait that won the approval of Ben Jonson from some hitherto undiscovered picture. Shakspeare died in 1616, when Droeshout was a mere boy, and there is abundant evidence to show that the engraver never saw the poet. The first folio in which his work appeared was not published until seven years after Shakspeare's death. Where, then, has been hidden all these years the source of its inspiration?

Some years ago the portrait that forms the subject of this article was offered to the trustees of Shakspeare's birthplace at Stratford-upon-Avon, but at the time they were unable to entertain the idea of its purchase. It had been for a long time in the possession of a family who always regarded it as an original portrait of Shakspeare, painted during his lifetime, their opinion being strengthened by the date it bears—1609. Consent having been obtained from the owner, it was added to the loan collection in the Memorial Picture Gallery at Stratford, and there it has hung since the spring of 1892. On account of its close resemblance to the Droeshout engraving, Mr. Edgar Flower, who is an enthusiast as well as an expert in such matters, was from the first particularly impressed with the portrait, and strongly felt that it ought to be secured for the memorial collection; but until the death of its owner, which occurred recently, this was for various reasons out of the question. It was then purchased by Mrs. Charles Flower, and, with the generosity characteristic of that lady, presented to the Memorial Gallery.

Mr. Edgar Flower determined to put the genuineness of the picture to every possible test, and a short time ago he invited Mr. Lionel Cust, F.S.A., director of the National Portrait Gallery, to visit Stratford, with Mr. Colvin, the Keeper of the Prints at the British Museum, and inspect it. Having examined the picture with the utmost care, they came to the conclusion that it was of great importance, and they had little doubt that it was painted in the days of Shakspeare. If this fact could be proved, the source of the Droeshout engraving would follow as a thing of course. Resolved to sift the matter to the bottom, Mr. Flower next conveyed the picture to London, and submitted it to the trying ordeal of inspection by a full meeting of the members of the Society of Antiquaries. That at such a

meeting different opinions were expressed goes without saying, but, on the whole, the old painting stood its trial well—the bulk of the evidence advanced being strongly in its favour. The objection that it was probably an Italian work, because it is painted on a panel of poplar wood, has since been triumphantly overruled by a British Museum authority, who has proved that its backbone is of English elm; and an expert has declared that the date, 1609, was painted at the same time that the other work was done. A suggestion has been made that the portrait has been painted (as portraits often have been) on top of another portrait; but as, in order to prove this, it would have to be defaced, if not destroyed, it is likely to remain a suggestion. Besides, such evidence would really be in favour of the work. Artists have often been known to utilise canvases and panels in this way. A painter deliberately contemplating a forgery would be more circumspect. Is it a copy of a portrait? That in Droeshout's time a genuine portrait existed seems to be beyond question; and it is far more likely that a picture that once existed should exist to-day than that it should have vanished and a copy of it remain. An eminent engraver, too, bears testimony to the fact that the picture could not possibly have been painted from the engraving. The plate, he thinks, must have been engraved from this picture, or from a drawing from it, for in those days it was usual for an engraver to make a drawing from a picture and then engrave from that, on account of the difficulty of moving pictures about. Mr. Poynter, R.A., and Mr. Oules, R.A., have, moreover, expressed decided opinions to the effect that the portrait must have been painted from life. And so, after this turmoil of nineteenth century criticism, the old portrait has been brought back to find an honoured and permanent home in that Stratford that Shakspeare loved so well, and to form one more object of intense interest to all pilgrims thereto.

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### AMBROISE THOMAS.

BY J. A. FULLER MAITLAND.

THE accommodating disposition that can move with the times in matters of art and taste is one that is generally envied on account of the worldly prosperity it usually secures; and, indeed, never to be uncomfortably in advance of one's age, nor hopelessly stranded in the conventions of a former day, has many compensations for the continual changes of front that the nimble artist must learn to practise. That academic emoluments are



more often gained by persons of this type than by any others is undeniable; but it is curious to watch how quickly the mark made by such as these upon their generation is wiped out by the work of those who have convictions of their own, which they obey with complete disregard of what their contemporaries may think about them. Not that all men with artistic convictions stand still; there are historic instances in the records of music which seem to imply that some of the greatest men have been prone to alter their views as to style or manner of expression. But there is this great difference between one class and the other: that in the one case a change of conviction comes because the man cannot help himself; his later views are acted upon with the same faithfulness as were his earlier, and he leaves the popular side for the unpopular, setting out, it may be, not knowing whither his convictions may lead him. In the other case, the artist finds that old traditions and fashions are passing away; and, though he would be quite content to keep to them, yet he fancies that by adopting the new manner of speech he will make sure of a new success, while he hopes that his former friends will either follow him into the new paths or be left in an ever-dwindling minority. Three of the greatest operatic composers the world has seen were of the former class; the styles of Gluck, of Wagner, and of Verdi underwent such complete revolution, that the earlier and later works of each would hardly be recognised as belonging to the same man. Yet each man felt for himself that the old ways were wrong, and that, in spite of what the public might say, he must obey his artistic conscience. We know how these three men have moved the world of music, and how their later rather than their earlier operas have proved, and are proving, their enduring works. Of the other class, it would not be easier to find a better instance than Charles Ambroise Thomas, the *doyen* of French composers, who died on February 12th. In respect of his repeated changes of front, he affords a sharp contrast to his one serious rival, the most prominent of his contemporaries, Gounod, who remained through life steadfast to one set of ideals, and reaped the benefit of his steadfastness in the devoted admiration of a certain large class of musicians all the world over.

Thomas was a little more than two months older than Liszt, being born at Metz, where his father was a musician, on August 5th, 1811. He entered the Conservatoire of Paris in 1828, four years afterwards won the Prix de Rome of that institution with a cantata called *Herman et Ketty*, and went through the usual period of residence at the Villa Medici, to which that distinction entitled him. His principal master for composition was Lesueur,

of whom it is related that he was accustomed to call Thomas his "note sensible," this name being given in France to the seventh note of the scale, known here as the "leading note." Whether the remark was founded on the fact that Thomas was the seventh in his class, or the seventh of his pupils who gained the Prix de Rome (both versions of the story are current), it is certain that it refers to the young composer's sensitive disposition, which undoubtedly won him the affectionate regard of the painter Ingres and of many artists who were associated with him. Of certain compositions, one a trio, another a set of *caprices en forme de valse*, written apparently during his stay in Rome, Schumann spoke with much more moderation, as well as with clearer critical insight than he sometimes exhibited. After his *Double Echelle*, given at the Opéra Comique in 1837, some six works of similar kind were produced, for the most part at the same theatre, but without much success; he collaborated with Benoist in *La Gipsy*, a ballet given at the Grand Opéra; and in 1843, *Mina*, a comic opera, in three acts, was brought out with some success. Its popularity did not last very long, however; and it is not improbable that the composer began to perceive that the Rossinian cadenzas and Donizetti's sugary tunes had had their day, for in his next work, *Le Caïd* (1849), he set himself to parody the conventional operatic style, and performed his task with such brilliancy that from that day to this it has held its place among the most popular works in the repertory of the Opéra Comique. It is, in truth, most excellent fooling, and may well have helped to dethrone the Italian composers from their long-held position in Paris. In the year following, another most popular work was brought out, a piece which French audiences still accept in all good faith, but which, if played in London, would have to be turned into a roaring farce if it were to be endured at all. *Le Songe d'une Nuit d'Été* has nothing whatever to do with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The plot turns upon an imaginary *amourette* between Shakspeare (pronounced "J'expire") and Queen Elizabeth; but in spite of this, the tendency of the piece is above suspicion, and it might, in fact, be presented at a temperance meeting in the form of a "service of song." The queen gets wind of the circumstance that under the bad influence of Sir John Falstaff (!) Shakspeare is being dragged into evil courses, and is sadly given to frequenting the Mermaid tavern. By a simple stratagem, she has the bard conveyed, when in his cups, to Richmond-park, where she appears to his astonished gaze as a mysterious veiled lady. Whether from courtly politeness or as a natural result of his recent debauch, he affects to mistake the Queen for one of his

own creations, Juliet for choice ; she does not reveal herself, but favours him with a severe lecture on the danger of his way of life, and the responsibilities that are attached to his literary eminence. Finally he is arrested and brought before her majesty at "Vitalle" Palace, when all is explained, and he goes home to write plays, avoiding the road that leads to the Mermaid. Some of the composer's most charming music is to be found in this queer work, and no wonder it has lived so long in the Paris repertory ; "J'expire" is cast for a capital tenor part, and the queen is a florid soprano, thus obeying the operatic tradition that bravura passages are only to be indulged in by royal personages or maniacs. *Raymond*, the overture to which does yeoman's service as an entr'acte in our theatres now-a-days, came next, in 1851. Another series of five operas, temporarily successful, but now for the most part forgotten, and another space of six years' virtual silence, bring us to his greatest work, with another remarkable change of musical style. There can be no doubt that what sent Thomas to Goethe for his subject was the success of Gounod's *Faust* in 1859. Gounod's librettists, MM. Carré and Barbier, had found it possible, by leaving the profundities of Goethe's *opus magnum* entirely untouched, to put together a very successful opera book by skimming the surface of the Margaret episode ; and no better men could be found to treat *Wilhelm Meister* in the same way. Unluckily, the result was not so good, and the opportunities given to the composer in the last two acts of *Mignon* are neither numerous nor important. At the same time, it must be admitted that in the first scene alone Ambroise Thomas contrived to give complete musical expression to the poetic figure of Mignon herself, with far greater and more genuine power of characterisation than Gounod brought to bear upon his Margaret. *Connais-tu le Pays ?* is undoubtedly a very Frenchified version of *Kennst du das Land ?* but it is an exquisite melody, and perfectly in keeping with the temperament of the wandering girl. No doubt the monotone so skilfully employed in the dialogue has something to do with the impression produced in this first act, and Philina's senseless roulades make us turn with thankfulness to the "naturalness" of *Mignon*, a quality which might in some impersonations escape attention without some such device. In the second act the character is completely lost in the tawdry charms of the coquettish Styrienne, a number obviously put in for the sake of vocal display, with that disastrous tendency to compromise which spoils so much good work, and most remarkably this, which might have been one of the most pathetic operas in existence. A greater man would have snapped his fingers at the convention



of the theatre for which the work was intended, that all pieces given there must have "a happy ending;" and the introduction of a vocal gavotte, founded on the charming entr'acte, before the second act, a concession to Mme. Trebelli, entirely ruins the dramatic significance of the music, which, as the subsequent action shows, has reference solely to the procession of the comedians, and nothing whatever to do with Frederick. The hopeless stupidity of the greater number of French tenors may have dictated the transformation of Frederick into a mezzo-soprano, and it is certain that in *Hamlet*, produced two years after *Mignon*, this well-known fact made it absolutely imperative to alter the title part to a baritone one. Either the Germans are more tolerant of pranks played with the masterpieces of their own literature than we are, or Shakspeare resisted the vulgarising processes of MM. Barbier and Carré more successfully than Goethe had done. It is certain that in England *Hamlet* was never a very great success, even when the intellectual art of M. Faure was exhibited in the principal character, and when Mlle. Nilsson appeared as Ophelia, a part for which she was ideally fitted in every respect. The mark made on the Parisian public by the two operas was an enduring one, and on the death of Auber, the composer was appointed, in 1871, director of the Conservatoire, a post of which he fulfilled the duties in a highly exemplary manner until his death. A one-act comic opera, *Gilles et Guillotin*, written years before, but produced only in 1874, is the only contribution to the stage between *Hamlet* and *Françoise de Rimini*, the latter brought out in 1882 with a good deal of *éclat*, but not much permanent success. It has been maliciously said that this work stands as evidence of the reawakened popularity of the music of Berlioz, and that it marks M. Thomas's third or fourth revulsion of artistic ideals. Be that as it may, the public in Paris have long settled that *Mignon* and *Hamlet* are to be considered as the composer's crowning works, and not even the ballet of *La Tempête* (1889), in which great liberties were, of course, taken once more with poor William J'expire, has altered the verdict.

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### BURLESQUE: OLD v. NEW.

BY W. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

YOUNG Mr. Seymour Hicks has just been telling a gathering of the Playgoers' Club that "burlesque as it was understood twenty-five years ago is dead as a door-nail, and will never be revived." This, from the mouth



of Mr. Hicks, who can have known nothing personally of the old burlesque in its prime, is not an utterance of much importance; but, singularly enough, it has been adopted and echoed by Miss Nelly Farren, in whom, more than any other living person, the old burlesque is personified. "Yes," she is reported to have said, "modern burlesque is far better than the old—for the actors." This is a little ungrateful of Miss Farren, whose celebrity as an actress is based (so far as the present generation is concerned) almost solely upon her achievements in travesty. It is true that, about thirty years ago, she played the Clown in *Twelfth Night*, and that in the early days of the Gaiety she made successes in old comedy and new melodrama—as Miss Prue, as Miss Hoyden, as Tilly Slowboy, and as Clemency Newcombe. But it is nevertheless with burlesque, and mainly with burlesque of the old sort, that her name is now, and probably will always be, associated. Very likely, if fate had assigned her ability and energy to comedy, she would have taken high place as a *comédienne*; as it is, she confesses that her favourite rôle has been Little Jack Sheppard, and at least it may be said, in her case, of the old burlesque that, whatever its defects and drawbacks, it did not prevent her from becoming one of the most popular of artists.

Nor, it is obvious, did the old burlesque militate against the popularity of many other noted players. To take examples from those still among us, it gave to Miss Marie Effie Wilton opportunities of which, as we all know, that clever lady fully availed herself. About nine years of her life did the sparkling actress, now so well known as Mrs. Bancroft, dedicate to the service of burlesque; and during that period she acted with artists who found that species of histrionic work by no means unfavourable to their professional progress. She co-operated at the Strand between 1858 and 1865 with performers of the stamp of James Bland, "Johnny" Clarke, "Jimmy" Rogers, Mrs. Selby, "Patty" Oliver, Maria Ternan, Eleanor Bufton, Maria Simpson, Rosina Wright, the Misses Swanborough, Charlotte Saunders, and, later, Fanny Hughes, George Honey, Arthur Wood, and David James—none of whom, I believe, ever complained that burlesque, as they knew it, depressed their powers and hampered them in their career. ¶

Take as another example Mr. Edward Terry, who, though now most familiar and best liked as an exponent of eccentric comedy, was for about fifteen years or so an actor chiefly in burlesque. Though in his early days at the Strand he made "hits" in *Old Soldiers*, and *Old Sailors*, and *Weak Woman*, he found ample occasion for the display of his delightful sense of humour

in the long series of travesties at that theatre, beginning with *The Pilgrim of Love*, *St. George and the Dragon*, and so forth. It was certainly the distinction he had been able to secure in poor "old burlesque" which obtained for him his subsequent engagement at the Gaiety, with its triumphs in *Little Don Cæsar de Bazan*, *The Bohemian Gyurl*, *Little Doctor Faust*, et id genus omne. At the Strand he was associated with Angelina Claude and Harry Cox, with M. Marius and Miss Lottie Venne, none of whom, I feel sure, had any reason to regret the time, talent, and trouble they bestowed upon the work of Byron, Reece, and Burnand. At the Gaiety, Mr. Terry was the co-mate not only of Miss Farren, but of Miss Kate Vaughan, Miss Wadman, and E. W. Royce, all of whom managed to become popular idols on the basis of the material supplied to them by the same body of writers.

Mr. Seymour Hicks, however, is not content to condemn the "old burlesque," as Miss Farren does, in a simple *ipse-dixit*. He essays to give some reasons for the faith that is in him. The old burlesque is dead, he tells us, because it was written in verse, and because that verse not only prevented the puns from having their proper effect, but impeded "gagging." This comes of talking about things of which your knowledge is not at first hand. Had Mr. Hicks had any personal acquaintance with the old burlesque, he would have known that the players contrived to gag, in spite of the restraints supposed to be placed upon them by the rhyming couplet. Not that I think "gagging" is to be regarded as a necessary condition of a burlesque's success; on the contrary, it is to be tolerated only when of the best, the most spontaneous, and the least intrusive; it is not to be tolerated at all when the text set down for the actor is of sufficiently good quality in itself. "Gag" has become so frequent and so acceptable on the comic stage of late because so many pieces of the lighter sort have not been "written" at all—because they have been the product of a species of partnership which included the manager, the *metteur-en-scène*, and the performers, but carefully excluded any such ancient institution as an "author."

That the old rhyming couplet impaired the effect of the puns imbedded in it is an assertion too frivolous to need combating. Precisely the reverse was, and would always be, the case. Men like Planché and à Beckett, Talfourd and the Brouchs, Byron and Reece, Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Burnand, knew perfectly well how to construct their lines so as to give the fullest value to their witticisms; and artists of the calibre of Charles Mathews, Madame Vestris, Mrs. Macnamara, Miss Priscilla Horton, Mrs. Alfred Wigan, Miss Julia Bennett, great-little Robson (another

instance of the fact that the old burlesque was “good for the actors”), Keeley, and E. Danvers—to name no others—knew perfectly well how to deliver those lines with all imaginable point and pungency. Mrs. Bancroft, in her *Memoirs*, tells us how, on one occasion, H. J. Byron, acting one night at the Strand with “Patty” Oliver in *The Maid and the Magpie*, suddenly interpolated the following couplet:—

Jujubes, oranges, and cakes I too did give her,  
*Pâté de foie gras*, which means *Patty O’Liver*!

“I shall never forget,” says Mrs. Bancroft, “the laughter and chorus of ‘oh’s’ that followed these lines. Neither Mr. Byron nor Miss Oliver could proceed for some time.” I do not quote the couplet as being especially brilliant; but the little episode shows, at any rate, that the old burlesque not only admitted “gag,” but contained puns which, though in verse, were yet able to carry themselves well over the footlights into the ears and minds of the audiences.

“But,” says Mr. Seymour Hicks, “all the puns have been made. In the old days the ground was absolutely untilled, but now it is a garden with every specimen labelled ‘Arbor Chestnutina.’” I don’t think Mr. Burnand, for example, would subscribe to this sweeping statement; there are, I should say, a good many *jeux de mots* still stored up in that wonderfully fertile brain of his, multitudinous though those be that he has perpetrated in the past. Mr. Hicks underrates the capacity of the comic writers of to-day. When puns are wanted they will be forthcoming, and will be, I dare say, of good quality.

But Mr. Hicks has yet another reason for believing that the old burlesque is “dead, never to be revived.” “The public,” he holds, “prefers plays dealing with everyday life to those extravaganzas treating of mythical kingdoms created by the old burlesque writers.” This is an assertion founded, no doubt, on the very great success of such pieces as *In Town*, *A Gaiety Girl*, *The Shop Girl*, and *An Artist’s Model*. Considerable, indeed, has been the vogue of these productions, and of others with a similar amount of liveliness and sparkle, furnished by competent writers, composers, vocalists, and actors. On the other hand, other effusions of this sort, less lively, less sparkling, and provided by less competent hands, have been egregious failures (I need not mention names). The public, I fancy, is not at all particular about the *genre* of an entertainment so long as the thing itself is entertaining. That playgoers are not specially enamoured of “plays dealing with everyday life” is seen, I think we may say, in the popularity gained and maintained by such extravaganzas



as *Little Christopher Columbus*, *Blue-Eyed Susan*, *Maid Marian*, and the like.

I may at least be permitted to oppose my own opinion to that of Mr. Hicks, and to express the belief that burlesque of the old sort is not yet played out. I mean, of course, the burlesque which really burlesques. Such travesty need not necessarily "treat of mythical kingdoms;" it is not obliged to take up "classical" subjects of the kind in which audiences formerly delighted. It may be as much up-to-date in topic as the *Model Trilby* which Miss Farren herself put on at the Opéra Comique, and which had so respectable a "run" there. It may palpitate with all the actuality which Mr. Brookfield, working with Mr. Hicks, infused into *Under the Clock* at the Court Theatre. It may even be as personal and esoteric as that legend of *The Poet and the Puppets* which was recounted by Mr. Brookfield at the Comedy. It is not even essential that the dialogue shall be set forth in the rhyming couplet. As a matter of fact (if my memory does not deceive me), the dialogue in *Under the Clock* was so set forth, and was uncommonly well written into the bargain. *Under the Clock*, it will be remembered, was a sort of *revue* of the theatrical year, and embodied travesties of several recent and current attractions. For my part, I should like to see such *revues* become an institution in our midst. Endowed with a slight, coherent plot, sufficient to serve as a framework, such satiric parodies might be freshened from day to day, as occasion served, and might be expected to attract the public almost, if not quite, continuously.

Mr. Hicks, I observe, uses a pecuniary argument in favour of the new burlesque (which, *en parenthèse*, is not burlesque at all). He says: "It will be of interest to enthusiasts of the old and scoffers of the new burlesque to learn that the net profit of the entire run of one of the most successful of the old verse burlesques, *Little Jack Sheppard*, did not amount to as much as the profit taken by *The Shop Girl* in three months." I suppose the reference here is to the first "run" of Messrs. Stephens and Yardley's burlesque in 1885-86. The "stars" on that occasion were Miss Farren, Mr. Fred Leslie, Miss Wadman, Mr. David James, Miss Marion Hood, and Miss Sylvia Grey—an excellent cast; a much better cast (I venture to think) than that by which *The Shop Girl* has at any time been interpreted. How, then, does it come to pass that *The Shop Girl* has been so very much more remunerative than *Little Jack Sheppard*? Because the dialogue of *The Shop Girl* is in prose? because of its opportunities for "gagging"? because of its almost entire freedom from puns? because it "deals with everyday life"? I do not



think so. One reason I should give would be that, in the case of the new-fangled "comedies with music" the managers have adopted—as they did not adopt to nearly the same degree in the case of the "old burlesque"—the policy of constantly introducing new features in the way of song, dance, "business," or change of cast. Pieces like *The Shop Girl* and *An Artist's Model* run so long, I believe, partly at least because the public is induced, by the new features to which I allude, to "patronise" them not once, or even twice, or thrice, but over and over again. There are people who tell you, as if the thing were quite a common-place, that they have seen *An Artist's Model* or *The Shop Girl* at least half-a-dozen times, or more.

But that is not all. Mr. Hicks himself supplies another reason which I should adduce for the long "runs" of what he calls "the new burlesque." "A musical farce at the Gaiety costs," he says, "from £3,000 to £5,000 to produce." That is to say, it is brought out with all the advantages of brilliant scenery, costly costumes, and high-priced artists. May that not be an important element in the success of these pieces? How could a burlesque of the old kind, on which a comparatively small sum of money had been spent, expect to stand up against a spectacle of the dimensions of *The Shop Girl* or *An Artist's Model*? On the "new burlesque" money is expended like water. There is no stint. Let the same amount be expended upon a burlesque of the old type (whether in verse or in prose), let the artists be as able and as popular as those employed on the new, let the piece be freshened as frequently and as cleverly as its present-day rivals, and I venture to think that the pecuniary results would be found entirely satisfactory.

Of course, when one champions the cause of the old burlesque and fulminates against the new, one does not desire to insist that the travesty of the future should be a slavish reproduction of that of the past. As I have said, the verse-medium for dialogue is not a necessity; prose, obviously, would do (as it has often done of late) at least as well. The old fashion of utilising popular melodies for the incidental ditties is also more honoured in the breach than the observance. The modern habit of supplying original and catching tunes is very greatly to be commended. Indeed, it is largely to the musical attractions of such pieces as *The Shop Girl* that their persistent popularity is due. How much *The Shop Girl* owes to Mr. Caryl and Mr. Monckton! how much *An Artist's Model* to Mr. Sidney Jones and Mr. Wenzel! What, however, one does expect of a so-called burlesque is that it shall be a travesty of something or other—that it shall have a distinct and coherent plot, however slight,

and that it shall not be a mere fragile skeleton on which to hang specialities by vocalists, dancers, and the like. Moreover, burlesque, when we get it, should be less elaborate and lengthy than in its "new" form. Travesty began to decline from the moment that it was presented in two or three acts and made to furnish a whole evening's entertainment. Extravaganza, like that produced by Planché and Mr. Gilbert, can be made to do this very well, because it has a wider scope and larger possibilities. But burlesque, at its best, should be brief, as in the recent cases of *A Model Trilby* and *Under the Clock*. For such efforts I feel sure there is a public, if they are backed up in the programme by pieces of suitable character and adequate strength. *A Model Trilby* was preceded first by an old-fashioned domestic drama, and afterwards by an equally old-fashioned and very flimsy farce: how could it be hoped that either would draw the public? Moreover, *A Model Trilby* was not too strongly cast; neither the singing nor the dancing was of the best available. Burlesque of the legitimate sort ought to have all the advantages accorded to the new-fangled kind; otherwise it is not fair to make comparisons. If both started in the race with equal weight, the "old," I believe, would easily outrun the "new."

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### THE OTHER MR. JONES.

BY H. CHANCE NEWTON.

AS the name of Mr. Henry Arthur Jones has been mentioned again a good deal of late, both as regards the production and the withdrawal of his Lyceum play, it may, perhaps, be not uninteresting to some to consider for a few moments another Jones who was also a playwright. There should also be an additional topical interest in consideration of this other Jones, from the fact that he at one time caused considerable heart-burning among his brother bards by being strongly recommended in aristocratic and official circles for the Laureateship of the period.

This Jones, like our modern gifted representative of the name, had also the front name of Henry; but he had no Arthur to call his own, nor was it ever reported of him—as far as we have been able to discover—as was falsely reported of our own Mr. Jones, that he was at one time anxious to abandon his surname. Our Mr. Jones is properly proud of the fact that he worked his way to his present fame and fortune after some years' diligent service as a commercial traveller. And though one may not be always able to

agree with his public utterances or his later dramatic methods, no one will dare say that Henry Arthur Jones's renown and prosperity have not richly been deserved.

Now, the other Jones—who “flourished” in the middle of the last century—was, according to presumably authentic records, “bred a bricklayer.” In this regard, albeit if in no other, the other Jones may be said to have resembled his fellow playwright, Ben Jonson, who, it may be remembered, served some time at this most useful calling in his early youth, and not far from where now stands the Britannia Theatre, Hoxton.

Henry Jones, notwithstanding the Welshness of his name, was a native of the “distressful country”—where the kings come from. It is related of him that, having a “natural inclination for the Muses, he pursued his devotions to them even during the labours of his mere mechanical avocations, and composing a line of brick and a line of verse alternately, his walls and poems rose in growth together; but which of his labours will be most durable, time alone must determine.”

Alas! poor Jones!—meaning, of course, this other Jones. Time has determined that, whatever has become of his walls, his poetry and his plays are about as dead as the deadeast of door-nails. Yet this other Jones, after some few hardships, contrived to secure a better “send off” than ever fell to the lot of our modern lecturer-dramatist. One reads that in the year 1745, when the Earl of Chesterfield went over to Ireland as Lord-Lieutenant, “Mr. Jones was recommended to the notice of that nobleman.” Anon his excellency, “delighted with the discovery of this mechanic muse, not only favoured him with his own notice, a generous munificence, but also thought proper to transplant this opening flower”—meaning the Irish bricklayer-bard—“into a warmer and more thriving climate”—meaning, of course, our Right Little, Tight Little Island.

His excellency, who, when he was “good,” was, like the little girl in the ballad, very, very good,—seems to have taken a great interest in young Jones, for, in addition to bringing him with him to England, he recommended that author to many of the English nobility, and thus helped to procure for him a large subscription for publishing a collection of his poems. The Earl also took upon himself the alteration and correction of Jones's tragedy, *The Earl of Essex*, and even prevailed on the manager of Covent Garden Theatre to produce the play. The Earl also recommended the poet to another poet of even inferior calibre, who is said to have shown Jones “a thousand acts of friendship,” a sort of thing which the ingenious Colley Cibber was, according to some authorities, not wont to indulge in unless he thought of making



something out of it. It would seem that one of these thousand acts of Colley's was to make strong efforts at Court to have Jones created Poet Laureate in succession to himself. Jones would certainly have been a better Laureate than Cibber, but, whether or no, he did not get a chance of displaying his genius in this direction.

*The Earl of Essex*, which was the only tragedy the other Jones ever finished, was, as regards run, quite the *Charley's Aunt* or *Our Boys* of the period. It achieved the astonishing run of twelve nights, which, as will be seen, beat the present Mr. Jones's last *Lost* play by two performances. In sooth it is a strange tragedy, not so much as regards its plot, which, apart from the introduction of an apparently unnecessary "carpenter's scene" or two, is pretty well conducted. The language, however, although not so poetical as that of our own Mr. Jones can be, is often very high-flown. Some may say that in this matter the present Mr. Jones is sometimes not altogether unlike the other Mr. Jones;—but let that pass.

Directly the curtain goes up we learn that Lord Burleigh, who, it will be remembered, possessed a Nod of Some Importance, has made arrangements to overthrow his rival Essex. Says he:

The Bill at length has passed opposing numbers,  
Whilst crowds seditious clamoured round the Senate  
And headlong faction urg'd its force within.

Sir Walter Raleigh, who is helping Lord Burleigh to concert his plans, speaks of the report of

A deep-laid mischief, by the earl contrived,  
In hour malignant, to o'erturn the State,  
And (horror to conceive)! dethrone the Queen.

Raleigh adds that Essex's friend, the bold Southampton, has been heard to storm at Burleigh and the impeaching Commons. Nothing daunted, however, Burleigh replies:

Let him rave on and rage. The lion in  
The toils entangled wastes his strength and roars  
In vain; his efforts but amuse me now.

Presently Burleigh summons to his aid the Countess of Nottingham, who addresses him as

Great Burleigh, thou whose patriot bosom beats  
With Albion's glory and Eliza's fame;  
Who shield'st her person, and support'st her throne . . .  
For thee, what fervent thanks, what offered vows,  
Do prostrate millions pay!

Great Burleigh presently informs this "bright excellence" (as he politely describes her) that Essex has recently married the Countess of Rutland, who, throughout the piece, is generally called "Rutland" for short. On hearing this, "Nottingham," who (N.B.) has had love passages with Essex, vows vengeance dire. As she truly observes:



Passion, repulsed with scorn and proud disdain,  
Recoils indignant on my shrinking soul,  
Beats back my vital spring, and crushes life.

She adds :

May quick destruction seize 'em !  
May furies blast, and hell destroy their peace !  
May all their nights !——

At this point Burleigh discreetly checks her, but takes care  
employ her in his plot. Whereupon the Countess remarks :

It shall be done ; his doom is fixed ! He dies !  
Oh ! here's a precious thought ! I never knew  
Such heartfelt satisfaction ! Essex dies !  
And Rutland in her time shall learn to weep. . . .  
Come, vengeance, come ! Assist me now to breathe  
Thy venom'd spirit in the royal ear !

Then she departs to set about her task ; while Burleigh un-  
chivalrously remarks :

There spoke the very genius of her sex.  
A disappointed woman sets no bounds  
To her revenge. Her temper's formed to serve me !

And it is ; for it is the scorned Countess who, when given the  
ring that, on being presented to the Queen, might save Essex  
from the block, suppresses that more than usually valuable  
trinket until poor Essex's head is off, whereupon she goes " off "  
her own.

One might go on quoting many a gem of the above kind from  
the other Jones's tragedy, especially from the Queen's speeches.  
But time and space forbid. The play is still extant, and written  
in very choice English, as will be seen. It will doubtless suffice  
merely to add a specimen of the other Jones's love-scenes. Here  
is one, when " Rutland " first meets her husband Essex on his  
return from Ireland :

COUNTESS R.—Oh ! let me fly

To clasp, embrace the lord of my desires.  
My soul's delight, my utmost joy, my husband !  
I feel once more his panting bosom beat ;  
Once more I hold him in my eager arms,  
Behold his face, and lose my soul in rapture.

EARL E.—Transporting bliss ! my richest, dearest treasure !

My mourning turtle, my long-absent peace,  
Oh ! come yet nearer, nearer to my heart !  
My raptur'd soul springs forward to receive thee ;  
Thou heav'n on earth ! thou balm of all my woe !

COUNTESS R.—Oh ! shall I credit then each ravish'd sense ?

Has pitying heav'n consented to my prayer ?  
It has, it has ; my Essex is returned !  
But language poorly speaks the joy I feel ;  
Let passion paint, and looks express the soul.

Alas ! poor Jones !—meaning, of course, the other Jones.  
Neither the success of this tragedy, nor the petting he received

in the higher aristocratic circles, seems to have done him any good. According to one writer of his time, "his temper was, in consequence of the dominion of his passions, uncertain and capricious. Economy was a virtue which could never be taken into his catalogue. He appeared to think himself born rather to be supported by others than under a duty to secure himself profits which his writings and the munificence of his patrons from time to time afforded." To sum up, the poor bricklayer-bard died in great want in April, 1770, in a garret belonging to the master of the Bedford coffee-house.

## ROYALTY AND THEATRE-CLOSING.

BY HENRY ELLIOTT.

THE late Prince Henry of Battenberg was buried at Whippingham, Isle of Wight, on Wednesday, February 5th. On that day, in respectful recognition of the event, nine west-end theatres closed their doors. A few days later, Mr. Beerbohm Tree, who represented the theatrical managers concerned, received from the Lord Chamberlain an expression of "her majesty's thanks and appreciation of this spontaneous act on their part," which marked, the Queen declared, "not only their loyalty and respect, but also their sympathy with her majesty and the Princess Beatrice and the royal family in the heavy affliction" that had befallen them.

The managers who closed their theatres on Wednesday, February 5th, were obviously well within their rights. It is easy to understand the motives of their action. The Queen, it was known, felt deeply the loss which her daughter had suffered in the death of her beloved husband, as well as the loss which she herself, the Queen, had sustained in the sudden calling-away of a son-in-law who had for so long a time been to her practically a son. Apart from the sorrow which all must experience at the sudden and premature ending of an honourable career, there was, no doubt, in the minds of the managers who moved on this occasion, a desire to make known to her majesty the strong sympathy with which she was regarded by them. One of those managers had just been commanded to play before the Queen at Osborne, and would have done so but for the untoward death of the lamented Prince; another had, within the last few months, appeared, with his company, before the Queen at Balmoral. A third had also enjoyed that honour within a recent period. But, in truth, no such personal reason would be needed in order to inspire a London theatrical manager with "loyalty and respect" for her

majesty. Those are sentiments which all of us entertain, and London dramatic *entrepreneurs* must have a double share of them, inasmuch as the Queen has, throughout her long reign, ever exhibited a kindly sentiment towards the Drama. We all know that during the lifetime of the Prince Consort she was a frequent and delighted playgoer, and that she often summoned distinguished actor-managers to give representations at her various residences. The taste and liking for the theatre which she has always shown has been inherited by her children and her children's children, and by no one more markedly than by the Princess so lately made a widow. The Prince and Princess of Wales and their children have ever been cordial patrons of the theatres, in which their faces are familiar; and if circumstances have prevented the Princess Beatrice from being a constant playgoer, her royal highness has made up for that, not only by encouraging private theatricals at Court, but, if rumour may be trusted, by suggesting or otherwise promoting the appearances of professional players before her majesty. If this be true, the managers who closed their theatres on February 5th had a special incitement so to do. They were not only paying a respectful compliment to the Queen; they were making such acknowledgment as they could of the favour which the widow of the deceased Prince had at all times extended to the histrionic art and its professors.

The managers, then, who have received the Queen's thanks in this connection have had abundant excuse for the line they took in the matter. They were, as we say, well within their rights. They were well justified in doing what they did. At the same time, there is, in the incident, at least one ground for regret. It is a pity that the closing of London theatres on the 5th of February should have been confined to nine establishments. It is a pity that the movement was partial, not universal. Though on the day of the Prince's funeral nine west-end theatres were shut, eleven west-end theatres remained open. The Lyceum did not close, nor did Drury Lane, nor did the Adelphi, nor did the Garrick—to name no others. Yet no one would be so foolish as to assert that the lessees, permanent or temporary, of those houses and of the others which remained open, are any less animated by "loyalty and respect" for the throne than are those *entrepreneurs* who shut their doors. The managers, obviously, were not unanimous in the affair. We take for granted that they were all approached; if so, it is clear that, while some thought the theatres should close on the day of the Prince's obsequies, others did not approve of the suggestion.



Here, again, it is not difficult to understand the point of view which probably was adopted. Granted that her majesty was known to be peculiarly affected by the decease of Prince Henry; granted that the Princess Henry was known to have been, all her life, a force making for the direct recognition of the stage by Royalty; nevertheless, there were two considerations which might well be urged against a formal theatrical closure on February 5th. To begin with, the burial of the Prince was taking place far away from London; it was being performed at a small village in an island on the southern coast of England. By no flight of fancy could the sound of theatrical voices and instruments be supposed to clash with that of the mourning in Whippingham churchyard. It was not as if a member of the royal family was being carried to his last resting-place at St. Paul's, or even at a place so nearly within hail as Windsor. The ceremony was being carried out in a part of England to which the roar of London revelry can never penetrate.

Nor was this all. It was not as if Prince Henry of Battenberg had been a member of the royal family by birth. He was so only by marriage, and, if one may so say, by adoption. Nevertheless, to close the London theatres on the day of his interment was to do for him no more than the London managers could possibly do for a Prince of the blood royal. It is worth the while of our metropolitan *entrepreneurs* to consider whether the homage involved in a cessation of their performances for a day and a night is not one which ought to be reserved for very signal and remarkable occasions. It is an act not to be undertaken without grave cause and consideration. A compliment loses its force and its savour when it is bestowed too freely. Prince Henry of Battenberg was a blameless and amiable man, whom everyone would delight to honour; but the closing of London theatres even for a day is an event for which there ought to be a broadly national reason. Moreover, it is a demonstration which ought invariably to possess the quality of unanimity. It is not enough for some of the theatres to be shut; all must be so. The occasion must be adequate, and the recognition adequate likewise. There ought to be no hesitancy or division of opinion. The managers should act *en bloc*. If they do not so act, the closure, being partial, must needs lose something of its spontaneity and grace, and that is a consummation to be regretted. Let us trust that when London theatres next close their doors, it will be with the concurrence of all concerned; and let us hope that the incident will be delayed until some deep and universal sorrow renders it not only proper, but inevitable.



## Feuilleton.

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### UNDER THE TREES.

BY ALFRED E. SNODGRASS.

**I**T had all been so different a little week ago. The sunshine had possessed a glorious brightness; the trees, the flowers, and the green fields a delicious charm; the grand old home a warmth and cheeriness at once restful and exhilarating.

But, alas! the joy had ebbed out of all these things.

The sunshine mocked her now; the trees only moaned as the wind in the dead of night bowed their lofty heads; and the stately mansion of her forefathers for generations back seemed to frown upon her with its oaken gloominess like unto a very prison-house.

A week ago, indeed, the whole world had worn another aspect to Alice. She had flirted gaily with Herbert Wendford, the young player; and an onlooker might have deemed it on her part a flirtation, and nothing more. But deep down in her heart she loved the dark, handsome fellow with all the strength and fervour of a passionate nature. It was no idle game she was playing with him, except, indeed, the game of life in which she staked her whole happiness. As for Herbert, he had been no unwilling party to those brisk rides in the crisp morning air, those joyous rambles on foot through the fields, those exquisite chats on the lawn after dinner as the twilight softly deepened into night. Trust a woman to read the meaning of a glance, a glistening eye, a tender inflection of the voice!

And she had been happy in her knowledge of the love kindling within his breast—happy as a child.

Then another life commenced. Bertha came home, and shattered all this happiness as if it were a mere toy—Bertha, her sister. Ah! that made the blow all the more cruel, it coming from her—the sister whom she had so longed to see after a six months' absence, Bertha, the playmate of her girlhood, the one-time *confidante* of her lightest thought.

But it is a terrible test of sisterly love to steal one's lover, to swoop down, meteor-like, in the very heyday of one's passion, and declare, "You cannot have this man whom you adore, whose life you feel to be bound up with your happiness. For I wish him for myself, and I will have him!"

And this was surely what Bertha had done.

On the day following her return, Alice had startled her and Herbert in earnest converse in the library, and she did not fail to note how her sudden appearance covered Bertha with confusion. Alice's heart leapt in the torrent of a sudden anguish, of a blighting revelation. She felt the vials of a fierce hatred open within her, and in one wild rush swamp that love for her sister which she had hitherto so warmly cherished in her heart.

There was no driving the hot current back, no stemming it even. It spurned control, and every subsequent familiar glance between the pair swelled the tide. But the turmoil was all within. Without, she was the Alice of yore; perhaps a little less buoyant, but apparently unsuspecting, unnoticing.

One evening the subdued lights showed four persons with very unequal appetites at dinner. Sir Richard Berkstone, however, fine hale country squire of the old estate, more than atoned for his two daughters' collapse after the fish.

"The Berkstones," he took occasion to observe, "have not been in the habit of thriving on nothing, you girls, you know. As for you, Bertha, London seems to have destroyed your appetite for good."

"No, it hasn't, papa. It's the change of air I haven't got over yet."

"Your mother used to say London always *gave* her an appetite. She loved the rush and the bustle so."

"Cupid has a way of meddling in these little matters, eh Bertha?" whispered Herbert.

"What's that?" queried Sir Richard, draining his glass.

Only Alice, with a bitter pang, had overheard the remark.

"I was saying," Herbert replied, looking towards his host, "that London air is different from what it used to be. More population, more smoke and fog, you know."

"Yes, perhaps so; but I didn't say I agreed with my dear wife. I can only eat properly with the open fields and the fresh, untainted air in my vicinity. London's all right—when you're out of it."

"That's not Bertha's opinion at present, I'll warrant," quoth Herbert, with a meaning glance.

"Oh! how can you be so silly. You know I'd far rather be here with—with papa—and—and Alice."

Herbert laughed quietly in response to her ill-disguised confusion, and again whispered hurriedly in her ear.

Alice gripped the edge of the table in her mingled agony and wrath. Did they flaunt their love before her very eyes to torture her?

The conversation meandered from one topic to another, and gradually settled between the two men.

"I've been thinking over what you were saying about actors and actresses, Herbert, and I must confess there's something in your plea. I suppose we cannot any longer keep up the old prejudice against them."

"Well, I fancy not. You see 'rogues and vagabonds,' as players are ignorantly supposed to be in the eye of the law—you should see the May number of *The Theatre*—can do so much better in other professions than the theatrical."

"Of course you'll admit there are actors *and* actors?"

"Decidedly; just as there are parsons and parsons."

"Well, really I don't know why I should have had a prejudice against the theatrical profession. In fact, I was hardly aware of that prejudice until you confronted me with the problem, 'Would I like an actor as a son-in-law?' As you say, a question like that puts the matter in such a vivid personal light. After all, it would depend chiefly upon the man, not his vocation."

"Except he were a Radical M.P., eh? But I'm glad to hear you say so, heartily glad. I've several very dear friends actors, and I can assure you they closely resemble human beings in many ways."

Dinner terminated as the two men talked of the mutability of things, and Alice and Bertha left them to continue the discussion amidst wreaths of smoke and with the assistance of a fresh bottle.

Timid of each other, the sisters mounted the stairs to their rooms without the exchange of more than half-a-dozen faltering words.

Alice locked her door, and threw herself on the bed, sobbing violently.

Her poor heart was torn with conflicting passions. She hated Herbert, she hated Bertha, she hated herself too—herself, yes, more bitterly than all. For she felt she wronged Bertha, that her hate for her was ungenerous, despicable. Was she to blame for this man's deception?



She had told Bertha nothing of her heart's dream ; they had ceased to be bosom friends as of old. It was surely he who was the villain, and he alone—he who had dared to attempt to console her that day when he said : “ Why, Alice, are you so changed towards me of late ? ”

Yes, he was a traitor and a villain in very truth. Yet she loved him all the same ; perhaps all the more since another had his heart.

A fierce contest raged within her as she lay prostrate there, a contest between love and love, between love and hate. But in the end she rose, smiling through her tears, with a fixed determination in her brain.

She removed the traces of the ordeal she had passed through, and went out and knocked gently at Bertha's door.

“ Bertha, dear, may I come in ? ”

There was no answer.

“ Bertha, may I come in ? ”

She turned the handle and peered into the room.

Bertha was not there.

Her heart gave a strange bound. Somehow she felt glad that fate thus momentarily thwarted her in her intended self-sacrifice. She turned to go, and ran against a maid-servant about to knock at the door.

“ Oh, Miss Alice, here is a note for Miss Bertha. I thought she was up here.”

“ No, she is not here, Jane ; but stop, I'll give it her. It's all right, thank you, Jane.”

She looked at the envelope. “ H. W.” were the initials on the back. It was, then, from him. Hurrying to her room she tremblingly tore open the envelope and read :—

“ My own darling,—

“ Will be waiting at the bottom of the garden near the summer-house under the trees at 11 to-night. Must see you. Don't fail.

“ Your own

“ HERBERT.”

She tore the missive to shreds.

“ Your own darling will be there,” she said.

Then she laughed queerly, and went down to the drawing-room.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was almost pitch dark in the vicinity of the summer-house as Alice, in her sister's stead, with a cloak wrapped round her, peered from beneath the hood for her cavalier.

Suddenly she found herself grasped in two strong arms.

"My dearest!"

"Hush! Speak low," she said in a husky whisper, in order to disguise her identity. "Father is walking on the lawn. He may overhear us."

"Perhaps it would be as well," was the answer, though the speaker followed her advice. "He shall see us, at any rate, very soon hand in hand before him, asking for forgiveness for making ourselves happy. And then, my own, we shall never be separated again."

"Then you really love me—still?"

"Really—still."

"And you never loved anyone else?"

"Never."

"Nor ever pretended to?"

"No, you jealous little one; not even pretended."

"Really, you say that to me, Mr. Wendford?"

"Wendford! Why do you call me Wendford, little pet? By the way, though, have you and Wendford arranged yet how we can best break the news of our marriage to your father? Has Wendford argued him out of his antipathy to actors—told him that we're not such a bad lot after all? And I'm getting on now. Have just got a splendid engagement, so that Herbert Winton may be a name worth having some day."

They had emerged, by degrees, from the deep shadow of the trees.

Alice suddenly threw back her hood, and turned her face towards him. She smiled brightly, and her voice rang gay and buoyant.

"Well, Mr. Winton, I congratulate you. You may well look bewildered. I'm Bertha's sister, and you'll forgive my not making the fact known to you before when I say I think I can help to pacify papa. He'll be awfully surprised, though. Meanwhile wait here, and I'll send Bertha to—to her Herbert."

She sped lightly over the turf, all aglow with the ecstasy of a supreme contentment.

Life had regained its zest for Alice.

## At the Play.

### IN LONDON.

IN the matter of new productions the past month has been a singularly barren one. From the managerial standpoint this, however, may be regarded as a healthy sign, inasmuch as it goes to prove that the popularity of existing programmes remains unabated.

#### JEDBURY JUNIOR.

A Light Comedy, in Three Acts, by MADELEINE LUCETTE RYLEY. Produced at Terry's, February 14.

Christopher Jedbury, Junr. . . . .	Mr. FREDERICK KERR.	Mr. Simpson . . . .	Mr. EDWARD BEECHER.
Mr. Christopher Jedbury . . . . .	Mr. JOHN BEAUCHAMP.	Whimper . . . . .	Mr. GILBERT FARQUHAR.
Major Hedway . . . .	Mr. J. L. MACKAY.	Job . . . . .	Mr. L. POWER.
Tom Bellaby . . . .	Mr. ARTHUR PLAYFAIR.	Mrs. Jedbury . . . .	Miss EMILY CROSS.
Mr. Glibb . . . . .	Mr. G. E. BELLAMY.	Mrs. Glibb . . . . .	Miss ELSIE CHESTER.
		Nelly Jedbury . . . .	Miss EVA MOORE.
		Dora Hedway . . . .	Miss MAUDE MILLETT.

Although slight in texture and revealing at many points the hand of the amateur playwright, Mrs. Ryley's comedy is so fresh, so fragrant, and so charming, as to insure for it a cordial welcome. With the courage of her sex, the authoress does not hesitate to set probability at defiance, and to demand from her audience a measure of make-believe not always to be relied on in these prosaic days. Luckily, however, the appeal is not in vain, and, despite its obvious shortcomings, *Jedbury Junior* conquers by virtue of its delightful qualities. Constructively, the piece is far from perfect. The characters have an irritating habit of drifting on and off the stage without any apparent reason, while events occur, not as it is natural they should, but simply and solely because the authoress is compelled by the requirements of her story to make them happen. It would be ungallant, however, to inquire too curiously into the why or the wherefore of a woman's purpose. Even the most fastidious critic is obliged to acknowledge at times the force of the French proverb, *Ce que femme veut*. Yet, when all is said, the charm and interest of Mrs. Ryley's work constitute in themselves a sufficient explanation of the hold it obtains upon the listener. The story starts with the glaring improbability that two people allow themselves to be hurried into a marriage which they neither desire nor approve, and that the ceremony takes place without either having seen or spoken to the other. To add to the incongruity of the situation, both assume names which they afterwards discard. The astute playgoer need hardly be told that after the lapse of some time the young couple come together once more, and in-



continently fall in love. Meanwhile, the knowledge of Christopher Jedbury's marriage has reached his father's ears, and the youth is in consequence ordered in the most summary fashion to quit the paternal house, a berth being found for him in the Bombay branch of the old man's business. Thither he goes, under the assumed name of Arthur Blank, and thither he is followed in due course not only by Dora Hedway, his sweetheart, and her father, but also by all the remaining characters down to Jedbury sen.'s butler! So preposterous, indeed, are the incidents of the last act that it is hard to accept them except as part and parcel of a pretty fairy tale. And as such it is best, perhaps, to regard *Jedbury Junior*, and so avoid any further necessity for criticism. Christopher, in the end, duly exposes the scoundrelly manager of his father's business, proves himself to be a man of brains and business capacity, and eventually discovers that the woman he is madly in love with is his own wife! Thus are forgiveness and happiness meted out to the Prince Charming of Mrs. Ryley's pleasing *conte bleu*. An excellent all-round performance contributed to the success of the piece. Mr. Fred Kerr, in the title part, played with considerably more animation than is usual with him, and even contrived to import a fair measure of pathos into the character. Miss Maude Millett stands *facile princeps* as the representative of a bright, winning, impetuous English girl, and nothing could have surpassed in sweetness or in grace her portrait of Dora Hedway. Mr. John Beauchamp gave a highly-finished study of the choleric Jedbury sen., and Mr. J. L. Mackay an exceedingly clever sketch of Major Hedway. Shadowy as the other characters are, they were effectively handled by the competent company which Mr. Kerr has gathered around him.

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### THE FOOL OF THE FAMILY.

An Original Comedy, in Three Acts, by FERGUS HUME. Produced at the Duke of York's Theatre, January 30.

Colonel Cardington	MR. ROBERT PATEMAN.	Martin .. ..	MR. LYSTON LYLE.
Peter Adolphus Gri-son	MR. CHARLES CARTWRIGHT.	Rose Lambert ..	MISS GERTRUDE KINGSTON.
Basil Lambert ..	MR. H. B. IRVING.	Kitty Trevor ..	MISS LENA ASHWELL.
Arthur Saville ..	MR. WILFRED FORSTER.	Cousin Tilly ..	MISS MARIE LYONS.

Produced on Thursday, the 30th of January, *The Fool of the Family* was withdrawn, after a run of three nights, on the following Saturday. The circumstance is perhaps the most eloquent testimony that can be afforded to the quality of the play. That the management should thus frankly have acknowledged its failure relieves the belated critic of the responsibility of giving utterance to views which, it would be idle to conceal, could be complimentary neither to the author nor to the producer of so inept a comedy. If in this instance

we are unable to adopt the time-honoured principle of saying nothing but good of the dead, we can at least refrain from speaking evil. *En art*, says an old proverb, *le sommeil est une opinion*, and if for "sleep" be substituted the word "silence," our impressions regarding *The Fool of the Family* may easily be surmised. Even judged from the low standpoint of melodramatic farce, Mr. Fergus Hume's play is unworthy of consideration, and the author, if he possess any sense of gratitude at all, ought to be thankful to us for drawing over it the mantle of oblivion. His story is merely a vulgarised version of Emile Augier's *L'Aventurière* related with none of the wit, cleverness, or ability shown by that famous French writer. Basil and Rose Lambert, a couple of unscrupulous adventurers, learn that a certain Colonel Cardington, with unspeakable foolishness, keeps in his own house a number of diamonds worth £30,000, the property of his ward, Kitty Trevor. By some unexplained means they contrive to secure a footing in the Colonel's house. But they have reckoned without the latter's nephew, Peter Grison, who, after having been sent adrift by his uncle, is, at the request of Kitty, allowed to resume his old position. Peter, although always regarded as the fool of the family, is, of course, an exceedingly shrewd and long-headed young man; or, rather, this is the impression intended to be conveyed by the author. As a matter of fact, however, his singularly fatuous behaviour is more than sufficient, in the eyes of the audience, to justify his claim to the title conferred upon him. At an early stage in the proceedings, Peter recognises the Lamberts as a pair of swindlers, by whom, two years previously, he had been drugged and robbed in a Bayswater boarding-house. In place of adopting the obvious plan of calling in the police, Grison imposes upon himself the task of unmasking the two, compelled thereto, doubtless, by the consciousness that did he decline to do so the author would be unable to lengthen his piece out to the required extent. For this superfluous act of devotion we confess we can hardly find it in our hearts to forgive Mr. Peter Adolphus Grison. In the end, Lambert obtains the key to the safe in which the diamonds are, but having discovered his purpose, Grison forestalls the would-be thief by concealing himself there. "When the pie was opened the birds began to sing," and it is hardly necessary to indicate the nature of Mr. Peter Grison's song when he is brought face to face with Basil Lambert, and so enabled to establish that gentleman's guilt. Unfortunately, one could not fail to be struck by the contrast provided by the discordant chorus which greeted the fall of the curtain a moment later. To the general performance, hardly greater praise can be given than to the piece.

Mr. Charles Cartwright was clearly as much out of his element as the fool of the family as Miss Gertrude Kingston seemed to be in the part of Rose Lambert. Nor is there much to be said for Mr. Robert Pateman's impersonation of the comically irascible Colonel Cardington. Mr. H. B. Irving played Basil Lambert in somewhat of his father's style, while Miss Lena Ashwell's Kitty Trevor was full of animation and of character.

### THE NEW BARMAID.

A Musical Play, in Two Acts, by FREDERICK BOWYER and W. P. SPRANGE. Music by JOHN CROOK.  
Produced at the Avenue Theatre, February 12.

Captain Lovebury	..	Mr. HARRISON-BROCKBANK.	William White	..	Mr. J. L. SHINE.
Lieut. Bradley	..	Mr. CHARLES ROWAN	Ethel Joy	..	Miss AGNES DELAPORTE.
Colonel Claymore	..	Mr. C. L. WILFORD.	Lady Moulton	..	Miss MARIA SAKER.
Bertie White	..	Mr. J. J. DALLAS.	Brenda Louth	..	Miss MAGGIE HUNT.
Mons. Bonsor	..	Mr. E. DAGNALL.	Mabel	..	Miss EDITH DENTON.
Gussie	..	Mr. JACK THOMPSON.	Kitty	..	Miss EDITH GAIN.
Tommy	..	Miss INGREVILLE.	Laura	..	Miss MARIE ALEXANDER.
Inspector Hart	..	Mr. BRANDRETH.	Dora	..	Miss LOTTIE COLLINS.
Club Porter	..	Mr. CARLING.			

*The New Barmaid* has perhaps grounds for claiming to be musical, inasmuch as Mr. John Crook has contributed to it some exceedingly pleasing and tuneful numbers; but by what right it is labelled a play we frankly admit we are entirely at a loss to guess. Possibly, however, the authors, recognising the absence of wit in their libretto, determined at the last moment to make amends by importing into the description of their piece one touch of humour. Late as it comes, we gladly welcome this sign of regenerating grace, and can only trust that its influence may be even more apparent in their next effort. Meanwhile, *The New Barmaid* must stand—or fall—by its own merits. Those, we regret to say, are few. Of plot the piece contains hardly more than might conveniently be packed into the proverbial nutshell, while in no respect can it be commended either for its originality or its ingenuity. It is true the public have long ere this ceased to demand the presence of either of these qualities in anything like large quantities where musical comedy is concerned; but, after all, there is such a thing as fair measure even in connection with that class of entertainment. Messrs. Bowyer and Sprange, however, do not appear as yet to have awakened to a proper sense of their responsibilities in this respect, but doubtless time—and the critics—will help to open their eyes. The idea which provides the basis of the slender story developed, through a maze of song and dance, in *The New Barmaid* is somewhat similar to that used in *The Shop Girl*, although as regards treatment the two possess little in common. The first act passes in the Owletts Club, where an intolerably vulgar set of “Johnnies,” “mashers,” etc., endeavour to keep things going merrily. How



Colonel Claymore comes thither in search of his long-lost daughter, supposed to be a barmaid employed in the Club, and how, when at length discovered, she proves to be anything but an acquisition, calls only for passing reference. Mixed up with these are two brothers, Bertie and William White (Mr. J. J. Dallas and Mr. J. L. Shine), one rich, the other poor, and such fun as the piece affords arises chiefly from the reversal of their respective positions in the second act. To Miss Lottie Collins, in the incidental part of a lady journalist, the authors owe a deep debt of gratitude. But for her unflagging energy and clever acting, it is not difficult to conjecture what would have been the fate of their piece. Miss Collins, it is true, brings to the theatre a little of the atmosphere of the music hall. She is, however, a thorough artist, and can deliver a topical song as few actresses are capable of doing. For the rest, mention need only be made of Mr. Harrison-Brockbank, an accomplished vocalist, Mr. E. Dagnall, admirable in a minor part, and of Misses Agnes Delaporte and Maggie Hunt as deserving praise. The authors' lyrics are chiefly remarkable for having attained the distinction of being vulgar but not funny, and it is distinctly to Mr. John Crook's credit that he has succeeded in wedding them to such charming and dainty music.

### ON 'CHANGE.

A Comedy, in Three Acts, adapted by Miss EWERETTA LAWRENCE, from the German of VON MOSER.  
Revived at the Strand Theatre, February 15.

James Burnett..	..	Mr WILLIAM FARREN.	De Haas ..	..	Mr. E. H. KELLY.
Professor Peckering			Tiffin ..	..	Mr. W. BECKWITH.
Peck ..	..	Mr. FELIX MORRIS.	Lavinia ..	..	Miss ENID SPENCER BRUNTON.
Tom ..	..	Mr. W. SCOTT BUIST.	Mrs. Peck ..	..	Miss ALICE MANSFIELD.
Joe ..	..	Mr. YORKE STEPHENS.	Millie ..	..	Miss GWENDOLEN FLOYD.
Mouser ..	..	Mr. JAMES WELCH.	Iris ..	..	Miss EWERETTA LAWRENCE.

Only a few words are required to record the revival of *On 'Change*, a farce which on its original production, some ten years ago, achieved a distinct success. The piece itself is a fairly workmanlike and amusing adaptation of Von Moser's comedy *Ultimo*. That it would ever have enjoyed sustained popularity is doubtful, however, had it not been for Mr. Felix Morris's extraordinarily fine performance as the old Scotch Professor, Peckering Peck. Seldom has anything so good as this been seen on the stage since the days of Phelps' Macsycophant. It is a living presentment, marvellously correct in all its details, of a dour, hot-tempered, stubborn Scotchman, possessed of the firmest belief in his own powers, and quick to resent the slightest hint in their disparagement. The impersonation is one which no lover of really good acting ought to miss. An admirable cast, which includes Mr. William Farren, Mr. Yorke Stephens, and

Miss Eweretta Lawrence in their original characters, gives all point and expression to the adapter's amusing dialogue.

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## IN PARIS.

*Le Modèle* at the Odéon, *Innocent* at the Nouveautés, *Le Dindon* at the Palais Royal, and *Grosse Fortune* at the Théâtre Français, are the *pièces de résistance* of the month.

*Le Modèle*, by MM. Henry Fouquier and Georges Birtal, is a psychological study after the fashion of the day, with a termination adapted to the contemporary theatre-going public. A young sculptor, Raymond (M. Magnier), loves his model, Albertine (Mlle. Dux), who is his mistress. He loves also his old friend and teacher's daughter, to whom he is affianced. The authors have explained that their idea is to exhibit these two loves in contrast—the one, the chaste and “social” love, “passionate and exclusive to the point of jealousy of the ideal rather than of loving beings; the other, the sensual love, unsacrificing, unscrupulous, yet impressive in its depth of sincerity.” The struggle between the two contending forces results in the defeat of the latter, and the death, by her own hand, of Albertine. The story is an old one, and the ending seems unnecessarily violent.

*Innocent* and *Le Dindon* are farcical comedies, full of Gallic verve and device. The former, by MM. Alfred Capus and Alphonse Allais, is a droll skit on French red-tapeism and sundry other administrative shortcomings. A poacher is arrested by mistake for an offence committed by an aspirant lover, and condemned to imprisonment. The lady imposes a condition on the said aspirant, that he shall give himself up and procure the liberation of the innocent man. This the said aspirant does, though rather tardily, seeing that he does it on the very day when the innocent man, having completed his term of imprisonment, is to be liberated. The revelation of the judicial error, as it turns out, however, complicates matters considerably. The innocent man can no longer be liberated without new formalities, and the prison authorities cannot receive the guilty man without still more difficult ones. Eventually all is put right; the sentimental dame espouses her not very savoury admirer, and the innocent poacher becomes an important centre of a political agitation. *Le Dindon* is the sort of extravaganza the average Parisian adores. The husbands are deceivers all, and the wives mean to get their revenge in kind. The whole *dramatis personæ* turn up by understandings and misunderstandings at the critical moment; the persons who wish to avoid each other are just those who meet; electric bells are unconsciously rung by a deaf person,

who is very visibly astounded by the commotion created—and so on. The piece is extremely ingenious and entertaining.

Lastly, a *grande première* at the Français has introduced M. Meilhac to that distinguished house. *Grosse Fortune* is the old story that much money does not necessarily make happiness. Pierre Mauras (M. Le Bargy) has suddenly come into forty millions of francs. In spite of his good fortune, he does not break off his engagement to Marcelle (Mme. Bartet). That shows what a nice fellow he was before he was spoilt by his good luck. His wife's friend, Georgette Narasty (Mme. Brandès), however, is a seductive and fortune-hunting adventuress, cuts out Marcelle, and relieves the husband of some of his superfluous millions. An explosion comes, and Marcelle leaves her husband. Her departure, witnessed by her husband and Georgette from the window, does not suit the plans of the latter, and she leaves him, too, with an injunction not to return to her house till he is reconciled with his wife. This is the climax of the piece, and is really telling. The reconciliation in the end, with the moral complete, falls flat. M. Coquelin cadet appears in an accessory character, and the admirable acting of the Comédie Française redeems a piece hardly up to the level of that illustrious company.

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#### IN BERLIN.

*King Henry IV.* (*König Heinrich IV.*), Herr Ernst von Wildenbruch's latest tragedy, was received on the occasion of its first performance at the Berliner Theatre, Berlin, with every mark of favour. The dramatist conceived the idea of writing this drama more than twenty years ago, when the Culturkampf was at its height. Other literary labours intervened, however, and caused him to delay its completion. It would have had more actuality at the time when Prince Bismarck was waging his war against the Roman Catholic Church than now, for it deals with the struggle between King Henry IV. and Pope Gregory VII. The Pope has refused to crown the King, and the latter, indignant at the slight, declares to the burghers of Worms that he will purchase new bishops with the money of the Jews of Worms, and put them in the seats of the bishops of Saxony who made common cause with the rebellious Saxon nobles. He borrowed money from the Jews, after exhausting the revenues of the Church, and it is not improbable that the Jews were the more willing to provide him with funds, for the reason that they hoped thereby to incline him favourably towards them. One thing, however, is certain, and that is that in his play the author has shown a spirit very widely removed from the persecuting dis-



position of the Anti-Semites, and the consequence is that he has been accused of endeavouring to ingratiate himself with the Jews on the Berlin Stock Exchange! In the second act the Pope is brought on the stage. He is holding a judicial court, and announces that, while he is disposed to pardon insults to his person, he will strenuously punish any offences against the Church itself. While he is launching his anathemas, his holiness is informed by Henry's messengers of his deposition by the King. In the third act, we see the King in Worms under the ban of the Pope, and forsaken by all save his loving wife, whose presence he has up till then but unwillingly tolerated. The little children of the town bring the royal children cakes and a Christmas tree, and the King is so touched by the scene that he resolves to cross the Alps in winter, and seek reconciliation with the Pope, thereby bringing peace to Germany. His further object is to do everything possible, before the expiration of the year of his proscription, to save his crown. It is not necessary to follow the historical course of events leading to the culminating scene, in which Henry is hailed as Emperor, and the Pope, deserted by the whole of his spiritual attendants, dies in the presence of one faithful priest. The play, in spite of obvious defects, is powerful and moving in a high degree.

At the Thalia Theatre, in Hamburg, Herr Hugo Lubliner has, during the last month, brought out a new four-act comedy, entitled *Die Junge Frau Arneck*. The first three acts were followed by the audience with the greatest interest and attention, but when the curtain descended on the third act it was felt that the play admitted of no logical and satisfactory conclusion. A man who has lived what is euphemistically called a man's life marries a girl who is hardly more than out of the schoolroom. The development of her ideas is very skilfully delineated, as well as the resolution which she forms to win the husband who it seems to her has only been lent to her so far. The way in which the indwelling purity and womanly instincts of the wife work upon the feelings of the man, tainted as he is with the corruption of the set in which he has lived, is admirably shown by the dramatist. Unfortunately, the final act was not satisfactory, and the audience were left with the feeling that a forced instead of a natural ending had been arrived at.

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#### IN VIENNA.

At the Theater an der Wien a new comic opera by Adolf Müller, called *General Gogo*, has been well received, and has, to all appearance, a very prosperous run before it. The words are



by Gustav Davis and Hugo Wittmann. *General Gogo* is a satire upon the officers of the French army, the personal allusions being not too finely veiled. General Dagobert Fragonard is in command of the troops at Lyons, and there goes by the familiar appellation of General Gogo. He is extremely popular, especially among the ladies of the ballet, by whom he is described as a *verfluchter Kerl*. His two comic songs, "Populär," and "Ich bin ein verfluchter Kerl," are hugely amusing. He has left a wife in Algiers, a merry sarcastic little wife, who surprises him at the manœuvres, and who, in spite of opposition from many quarters, obtains the victory over her rivals. In the meanwhile the Minister for War, a civilian like Freycinet, who, as an unknown private individual, is frequently thrown out with the connivance of General Gogo, also watches the manœuvres, and, as a result, the General is condemned to thirty days' arrest. It so happens, however, that the Ministry is overturned just at this time, and the new premier hastens to offer the post of Minister for War to the immensely popular Gogo. The scene of this military farce is laid in a castle at Lyons. The usual comic business is provided, such as General Gogo's passing off his wife as his daughter, while the Lord of the Castle represents his niece as his wife. Both men naturally go trespassing on each other's preserves, and the result is sufficiently laughable.

Three one-act pieces have been brought out at the Raimund Theatre during the month with unequal success. Paul Heyse's *Ehrenschnlden* has for its subject the sin of an officer in falsely pledging his word of honour. He has seduced the flighty wife of a worthy man, who, he later on learns, is his benefactor. In order to save the reputation and feelings of the woman he has betrayed, and the man he has wronged, he lies to the husband and denies his offence, adding to his passionate denial the assurance of his innocence upon his word of honour. His remorse at doing this is too much for him, and he dies by his own hand. He does not, however, repent of the deed which led to his perjury, and the conclusion of the piece, which is reached by his suicide, is therefore felt to be unsatisfactory, although his conduct is conformable to the code of honour accepted in certain circles of German society. The audience remained cold and indifferent. The failure of the author, who has achieved so many successes as a novelist, was accentuated by the bad acting of his piece.

*Wunderkind*, by Fulda, another one-act piece, was well played, but was hardly more successful. The third piece was a one-act drama by Carmen Sylva, the cultured and gifted Queen of Roumania, and its title is *Ullranda*. It is a tragedy of the days of the Vikings, when prisoners of war were offered up upon the

altar, or, with an iron ring round their necks, were condemned to hopeless and terrible slavery. Arbogast and Wodmor have sailed across the sea on a voyage of bloody revenge. The people who have remained behind have promised to the conqueror their loveliest maiden, the beautiful Ullranda, as the prize of victory. Ullranda's hopes are centred in Arbogast, but the wild Wodmor is the victor, and he leads back Arbogast in chains because the latter refused to acknowledge him when he was elected leader of the band of warriors. Arbogast is condemned to death, but Ullranda clings to him and pushes Wodmor back. The brutal chieftain thinks he will subdue her as the storm-wind subdues the sea, and in order to break her spirit he decrees that she shall be the priestess at the altar for an hour, and herself, under pain of dishonouring slavery, sacrifice the fettered Arbogast. She certainly kills her lover by his own desire, but she also kills Wodmor immediately afterwards with the sword of revenge, which has grown red-hot in the glowing coals of the altar fire. The people and the warriors wish to stone her; but the white-haired priest comes forward, and consecrates her as the priestess of the sacrifice, because her blood-stained hand has shrunk from no sacrifice, and her heart is turned to steel and will never more beat with love for man. Noble dialogue springing from truly powerful feeling, an heroic theme of the olden time, a stage setting rich in imagination and in scenic and decorative excellence, combined to make a picture of striking effect. The audience followed the performance with breathless interest, which was increased by the re-appearance of Fräulein Barsescu in the principal part.

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#### IN COPENHAGEN.

The number of Danish composers of opera is not large, and the number of those who have succeeded in making a reputation for themselves abroad is soon counted. It is, therefore, not surprising that a new opera by a native composer has been awaited with considerable interest in Denmark. *Aucassin and Nicolette*, by August Enna, produced for the first time last month in Copenhagen, was received with unusually cordial applause. It is pretty certain that this new opera, like its predecessors, *The Witch* and *Cleopatra*, will soon find its way into foreign countries. Of course, the librettist has been inspired by the famous old French tale, now in verse and then in prose, of the same name. The time is that of the Troubadours, the scene is the Castle of Beaucaire in Provence. The Count of Valence besieges the castle, and old Count Beaucaire in vain entreats his son Aucassin to lead the defenders into action. On one condition

only will the young man take part in the engagement, and that condition is that his father will allow him to see his sweet friend Nicolette again. Beaucaire consents, and Aucassin fights and wins. Nicolette is a waif who was found destitute outside the castle, and brought up with Aucassin by a relative of Beaucaire's. The old man grows very angry at his son's love for the penniless and obscure maiden, and causes her to be confined in the fortress. When Aucassin comes back victorious his father repents him of his promise and breaks his word. The son thereupon sets his prisoners free, and is himself imprisoned in a dungeon. Nicolette's gaolers let her escape, and she wanders into a wood, whither Aucassin follows her when he gains his liberty. He finds her in a hut hidden by foliage and decked with flowers, which Nicolette has gathered for her lover, whose appearance she hails with joy. The happy pair are soon discovered, and Nicolette is condemned to be burnt as a witch. All the preparations are being made for the *autodafe*, which is to include Aucassin, when Saracen ships appear on the coast, and the lovers endeavour to reach them and escape. Only Nicolette is saved, in a boat which Aucassin has contrived to summon, and she then disappears for a time. The third act passes ten years later. Aucassin's father is dead, and his subjects urge their new lord to marry. Always cherishing the memory of his youthful love in his heart, the new Count of Beaucaire betroths himself to the daughter of the Count of Valence. Nicolette, of course, reappears at the critical moment—in the guise of a Moorish singer. She has come to see her lover once again. He recognises her in the approved romantic manner, and the course of true love, which has thus far run anything but smoothly for them both, culminates in their happy union.

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#### IN ITALIAN CITIES.

*La Navarraise*, Massenet's latest work, which was produced last month for the first time in Italy at the Scala, Milan, is in its way something more of a novelty than is usually implied when that word is used respecting an addition to the domain of opera. In one important respect it is different from probably anything which has been seen before on the operatic stage, and so much is this considered to be the case in Italy that one critic ventured to declare that, had *La Navarraise* been the work of a young composer not previously known to the public, it would have been taken for granted that he had failed to comply with the traditional canons of the operatic stage from sheer ignorance of their nature. The startlingly rapid action is one of the most



striking features of the work, and, at the same time, a feature which, from a managerial point of view, opens up a difficulty, inasmuch as it entails the selection of artists who must be actors as well as singers. At the Scala this difficulty was overcome by the engagement of Signora Elisa Frandin, Signor De Lucia, Signor G. Roveri, Signor M. Wigley, Signor G. Giordani, and Signor E. Broggi-Muttini for the leading parts. The *mise-en-scène* was excellent, and the performance generally was most successful. At Turin the Ando-Leigheb company played an Italian translation of M. Sardou's *Marcella*, but failed to move their audience to any great pitch of enthusiasm. This can hardly be said, however, of the first production of Signor Puccini's new opera, *Bohème*, in the same city, when the excitement was such that the audience were not satisfied until the composer had responded to their calls no fewer than fifteen times. At Turin, also, *Ecce Homo*, a three-act drama by Signor Cognetti, was produced with signal success. *Cortigiana*, a new opera by Signor Scontrino, which has a plot based upon the siege of La Rochelle, made its first appearance at the Dal Verme, Milan. Though its reception was good, it is not of a very high order of composition, and is unlikely to take a place among the Italian favourites. An Italian rendering of *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* was produced at the Manzoni, Milan, but the interest of the audience could not be sustained much beyond the first act.

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#### IN MADRID.

Señor Vital Aza, whose successful little comedy *La Rebotica* has given him a high place among the present-day writers of Spanish comedy, has just completed a new work of a similar kind, which he has entitled *La Praviana*. Produced at the Teatro Lara, it met with such a reception that a long run for it is predicted. After having been closed for some days the Teatro Real reopened with *El Profeta*, with Señora Leonardi as the heroine and Señor Mariacher and Señor León as the leading tenor and bass respectively. *El Rompeolas*, a lyrical farce, which was first put on the stage at the Zarzuela in the course of last month, must be regarded as a successful piece, though the second act leaves considerable room for improvement. Señores Cantó and Arambilet are the authors of the libretto, and Señor Santamaria is the composer of the music. *El Cortijo de la Irene*, which was produced at the Eslava, has the recommendation, which does not attach to many other pieces at a time when to be foreign is to be fashionable, that its plot is entirely and peculiarly Spanish in character. The story unfolded is that of a military captain



who has quarrelled with his *fiancée*, Irene, and is thrown into a state of jealous fury by the discovery that a stranger has been seen entering Irene's residence under cover of darkness. Determined to discover the identity of his supposed rival, he succeeds in gaining admittance to the house without the knowledge of Irene, and conceals himself to await the arrival of the stranger. The door slowly opens, and he is just about to spring forward and take the vengeance which he seeks, when he is astounded to find that the person who has entered in man's attire is no other than Irene, she having so dressed herself with the express object of arousing the captain's jealousy, and thus indirectly leading to a reconciliation. The libretto of the new work is by Don Carlos Fernandez Shaw, and the music by Señor Chapi. Señor Perez Galdós has dramatised *Doña Perfecta*, a novel which he published about twenty years ago, and which has become one of his most famous works. As has happened many times before in the case of a story too well known to the public, the stage version caused considerable disappointment.

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#### IN NEW YORK.

Madame Bernhardt is again here, but has not repeated her former triumphs. At moments during her performances she seems to be merely walking through them on the assumption that the audience has come to see her, and not a piece of acting. It is for this reason, perhaps, that *Izeyl*, the romantic drama by MM. Sylvestre and Morand, was received with some coolness. This play, like the revivals of *Camille*, *Fedora*, *Adrienne Lecouvreur*, *Gismonda*, and *La Tosca*, would have been much better attended if Madame Bernhardt had refrained from personalities concerning Miss Fanny Davenport and Madame Duse, creating deep offence in the minds of all New York playgoers. At the Garden Theatre, *Chimmie Fadden*, a local play of the type that Edward Harrigan has made so famous, is a marked success. Mr. Charles H. Hooper, as the Bowery hero, has, so to speak, "made" the play. *The Two Escutcheons*, a comedy adapted from the German by Mr. Sidney Rosenfeld, gave Mr. James Lewis an exceptionally good opportunity for the display of his comedy powers. Miss Rehan appeared to great advantage in a part that in other hands would have been almost colourless. Mr. Frank Worthing, abandoning his *jeune premier* characters, acquitted himself more than well as a young spendthrift. At Palmer's Theatre, *The Squire of Dames* has failed to justify the high opinions expressed by some of the critics, being withdrawn after three weeks. Its original has been spoken of as a well-made play,

and the adaptation felicitous. Dumas, as has before been pointed out in *The Theatre*, referred to *L'Ami des Femmes* as a *pièce mal faite*, and the adaptation undoubtedly suffers from the necessary change of background from France to England. Mr. John Drew, as Mr. Kilroy, has evoked hearty and well-deserved praise. Miss Maud Adams was the Mrs. Dennant, and again proved herself in every way worthy of supporting so finished an actor as Mr. Drew. At the Empire, another London play, *A Woman's Reason*, has been given. The plot is unsavoury, and the production seems to be saved from failure only by the excellent acting to be seen in it. Miss Viola Allen, as the Hon. Nina Keith, was little short of perfect. One mistake in this most difficult part would have ruined the play. Miss Allen not only avoided pitfalls, but saw and took advantage of the few points at which she could legitimately shine. Of the actors, Mr. J. E. Dodson easily carried off first honours. His performance of Andrew Gibbard in *Michael and His Lost Angel* is the only but all-sufficient reason for that play being gratefully remembered by the few who saw it. Now he has added to his list another and a very different piece of work in the Rev. Cosmo Pretious. The *Evening Sun* says of this performance: "It was played so well by Mr. J. E. Dodson last night that it became the one cheering feature of the play. In all his long career of character work Mr. Dodson has done nothing more original. His was an artistic performance of the first water." Mr. Henry Miller as the husband, and Mr. Edgar Davenport as the lover, were both excellent. Mr. W. H. Crane has reappeared at the Fifth Avenue Theatre in a rather thin melodrama, by Mr. Franklin Fyles, entitled *The Governor of Kentucky*. His company is above the average, and from the fact that he is one of the few actors who can make a success of almost any play, it will not be surprising if he gets a fair run out of it. Miss Ada Rehan has made one of the successes of her career in *The Countess Gucki*. The Countess is a lady who plays with her admirer much in the same way as Beatrice does with Benedick, and, like her, eventually falls in love with her butt. The story is of gossamer, but is delightfully told. Mr. James Lewis is again at home and Mr. Charles Richman, a new comer to Daly's Theatre, acquits himself creditably as the Countess's lover. Henry Pettitt and Sir Augustus Harris were the authors of the five-act melodrama produced at the American, called *Burmah*. A battle scene including the introduction of a real Maxim gun, forms the principal scene of the play. There is less of originality in the piece than might have been expected of such authors—the plot following very conventional lines. This and *The War of Wealth*

certainly creates an *embarras de richesses* in the matter of melodrama. The latter, produced at the Star Theatre, is by Mr. C. T. Dazey who, although crudely effective, is not, of course, to be compared with such pastmasters as the authors of *Burmah*. At the Lyceum *The Prisoner of Zenda* has been revived, with Mr. J. K. Hackett as the Red Elphberg.

#### SIR HENRY IRVING IN AMERICA.

The present tour of the Lyceum company has been marked by a triumphant progress over what to them was entirely new ground. It had long been Sir Henry Irving's wish to visit the South. Mr. Abbey gladly fell in with this project, and more than a year ago placed before him an itinerary for the purpose. He made but one objection to the suggested route. "Is it not possible at any exercise of exertion," he asked, "for us to appear in more cities than you mention?" So, at the conclusion of a remarkably successful engagement at Washington, the company left for Richmond, where they played on January 20th and 21st, at first in *The Merchant of Venice*. "It is a generally acknowledged fact," wrote the dramatic critic of the *Times*, "that nowhere the world over do foreign artists—I mean artists of true authority and distinction—immediately meet with such a warm, such a whole-souled reception as in this country. At the Academy last evening, Henry Irving and Ellen Terry made their first appearance before a southern audience, and fairly carried that audience by storm. The house was crowded in every part, and the assembly was brilliant, fashionable, and thoroughly representative. The revival of *The Merchant of Venice* captured the public fancy, and in every quarter it was sincerely felt and proclaimed that here at last was the perfection of stage display. The performance was round, symmetrical, and thorough, every detail being kept subordinate to intelligent general effect, and no effort being made towards overweening individual display. The Shylock of Henry Irving, 'feeds fat the ancient grudge' against Antonio, until the law of Portia, more subtle than equitable, interferes to thwart him; but also he avenges the wrong that his 'sacred nation' has suffered. His grasp of the character is firm, his execution of it flexible with skill and affluent with intellectual power. If memory carries away a shuddering thought of his baleful gaze upon the doomed Antonio and of his cry at the summons, 'Come, prepare!' it also retains the image of a father convulsed with grief—momentarily, but sincerely—and of a man who at least can remember that he once loved. Ellen Terry's Portia was stately, yet fascinating; a woman to inspire awe, and yet to captivate every heart. Nearer



to Shakspeare's meaning than that no actress can ever go. Never in one day has the poetry of Shakspeare fallen from human lips in a strain of such melody; with such teeming freedom of felicitous delivery and such dulcet purity of diction. The illusions of stage-craft, the splendour and the suggestion of costume, the scenic effect of changing groups, the use of figure, voice, and action, the warp and woof of dramatic art in all its complexity, these are all woven together in one end—the play." "Richmond," writes the *Dispatch*, "has been served a dramatic feast, and a most sumptuous one at that. To say that Sir Henry Irving is the most original and remarkable actor that has visited us in the present decade is but to endorse the accepted opinion of cultivated society. He has so thoroughly mastered the character of Shylock that it becomes real, and not a stage-picture."

No less enthusiastic was the greeting accorded to the players at Charlestown on January 22nd, at Savannah on January 23rd, and at Atlanta on January 24th and 25th. In the last-named city he found Paderewski a rival attraction, but nevertheless had overflowing audiences. His arrival was heralded in a cordial article by the *Constitution*. "Had he come to us without any title," says the writer, "the man who stands at the head of his profession in England, and who is confessedly the greatest producer—using the term in its stage relation—the world has ever had, would excite just the same interest and would draw just the same houses. There is every reason why he should, for he has earned his place on the topmost round of the ladder. Irving did not need the title, and, indeed, I have always felt that it was the peerage, and not Sir Henry, who was honoured by its conferment. We will all go to see Irving the actor—not to omit, of course, the very charming and most talented Miss Ellen Terry, who is a very prominent part of the Irving ensemble—because he is a great actor, and because he produces great plays with a completeness that has never been attained by any of his predecessors. I am sure Mr. Irving will be given a greeting worthy his position." Nor was this expectation disappointed. People came from all parts of the state to attend the performances, and during the whole of the previous night—from six o'clock in the evening until nine o'clock the next morning—there was an ever-increasing crowd at the box-office of the theatre of would-be purchasers of tickets. Not a few of this crowd were pugilists hired for the purpose. "What," says the *Constitution*, "a magnificent ovation he received, and what magnificent return he gave for it! In the wildest flights of his fancy, Shakspeare could not have dreamed of such a production of his famous play. However much difference of opinion there may be among critics as to Mr. Irving's portrayal of the great rôles of Shakspeare, there can be no dissenting voice in the verdict



that no man has ever given such productions—no, not in the history of the stage. There has been nothing that could compare with these Irving productions, and it is axiomatic, therefore, that Atlanta has never seen such magnificence before. No wonder the world calls his Shylock great; it is the Shylock of Shakspeare come to life.”

New Orleans was in quite a delightful flutter of excitement for four days after January 27, when, again with Paderewski as a friendly revival at another theatre, the company appeared at the Grand Opera House there in *The Merchant of Venice*. The rush for seats is described on all hands as without a parallel. Here, as throughout, the revival was hailed as nothing less than a revelation. “The presentation,” said the *Times-Democrat*, “was a splendid one from either a dramatic or a scenic point of view. It was not merely that each scene was realistic to the last degree, stagecraft and scenic awe being seemingly exhausted in the creation of fitting effects, but there was an artistic harmony of tone and colour everywhere that told unmistakably of the master-hand of the true artist working in even the smallest details. Henry Irving has often been pronounced the greatest of stage managers, and to his splendid stage productions have been credited much of his phenomenal success as an actor. This is an incorrect and unfair estimate of his dramatic genius, but at the same time the pre-eminence of his stage management must stand unquestioned. Taking his production of *The Merchant of Venice* last night as a sample, it can only be said that it was adequate. But, after all, this is saying a great deal. It was adequate in that it preserved the dramatic illusion from first to last, but that it did not transcend the limit of adequacy was proven by the fact that even the most splendid of the stage pictures presented never for one moment distracted the attention of the playgoer from the action of the play. The most exquisite harmonies of colouring, the strongest perspectives, and, in short, the most artistic of the stage pictures always blended and harmonised with the development of the story, and they were always wholly subordinate to the dramatic effects. Henry Irving’s conception of Shylock is a sublime one. It is the Jewish patriarch of Scripture more than the modern usurer. He portrays at once the grandeur and the failings of his race, but in such a way that the rank injustice which he suffers unwittingly wins for him not a little of the sympathies of the audience.” What the *Times-Democrat* says of the performance generally may be taken as typical of all that has been written and said in the South on the subject. All playgoers had heard of the achievements of Sir Henry Irving elsewhere, but the direct proof they had of some appear to have exceeded their most high-flown expectations.

## Echoes from the Green Room.

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SHORTLY after the funeral of Prince Henry of Battenberg, the Queen requested the Lord Chamberlain to express to the managers of the theatres who closed them on that day "her majesty's thanks and appreciation of this spontaneous act on their part, which marks not only their loyalty and respect, but also their sympathy with her majesty and the Princess Beatrice and the royal family in the heavy affliction which has befallen them."

MADAME PATTI, who has just left Nice for London, was once the recipient of a pretty compliment from the Prince of Wales. He arrived at Craig-y-Nos during a heavy downfall of rain. He was met at the door by his hostess, who said that she had been praying for fine weather. "Madame," said the Prince, "if you had sung your prayers I am sure it would have been all right."

SIR HENRY IRVING has no reason to be dissatisfied with the results of his tour in the South. Here, as in the North, he has, in the words of a well-informed correspondent, been "carrying everything before him." New Orleans hailed him with as much enthusiasm as does New York.

No inconsiderable part of his time in each place he visits is given up to the irrepressible interviewer. To one of these he mentioned the fact that in early life, at Manchester, he played a subordinate part to the Hamlet of Edwin Booth. "And that Hamlet," he added, "was one of ideal beauty."

FROM Washington we learn that since Sir Henry Irving accepted the responsibilities of knighthood he seems to have evinced a lively interest in the affairs of nations. During his visit to that city, he found time, with Miss Terry, who is said by a local journalist to have "floated in as gracefully as swansdown," to visit the Senate Chamber at the height of a debate. They had seats in the private gallery, and were, of course, the observed of all observers.

THE Irving engagement at Washington was in every sense a brilliant success. The President and Mrs. Cleveland occupied boxes on one of the *King Arthur* nights. On another occasion the entire second gallery was filled with pupils of the Central and Business High Schools.

LIVELY indeed was a scene at the Jefferson, Richmond, on the night of January 19, when the British Association in that city entertained Sir Henry Irving at dinner. Mr. Alexander Cameron presided. Mr. Webb-Peploe proposed the health of the chief guest, describing him as one recognised by the English speaking world as 'a master without peer. Another guest was the Hon. President of the Court of Appeals of Virginia, Judge Keith, who spoke of Sir Henry as the greatest living interpreter of the greatest of all dramatists.

IN an interview at New Orleans, Sir Henry Irving contradicted a rumour that he intended to retire from the stage shortly, adding that he had made engagements for two years.

ONE of Sir Henry Irving's audiences at Atlanta had a picturesque and striking feature. From far and near the mighty nobles of Yaarab Temple Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, Atlanta oasis,

gathered in the city to worship at the altar of art. No fewer than two hundred of them, each wearing a sharp tailed black coat and a red fez, and each accompanied by a lady. At about eight o'clock they began to appear in the neighbourhood of the Grand Opera House, where on that night Sir Henry Irving was to play *The Merchant of Venice*.

MADAME BERNHARDT has aroused no little ill-feeling in New York by some remarks in disparagement of Miss Fanny Davenport and Signora Duse, and this disparagement both press and public are disposed to resent. "It is utterly ridiculous," she told an interviewer, "for the critics to compare me to la Duse. There is not the slightest similarity in our work. As a clever *comédienne* she could justly be compared with Réjane, but it is positively stupid to compare her with me." "No one who has seen Duse and Réjane," says the *Mirror*, "would think of putting them in the same category. As well group Clare Morris and Lotta. Duse's power is greater than Bernhardt's, for Duse's is the power of truth, while Bernhardt's is the power of theatricalism."

SIGNORA DUSE was to appear in Washington on February 17, and in New York a week later. Subsequently she goes to Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore and Brooklyn. She refuses to play at Chicago.

THE King of Sweden has personally conferred upon Signora Duse the Medal of Sciences and Arts, and presented her with an autographed portrait of himself. "Signora," he said, "you have travelled all over the world, and I never move from my country. I hope that good fortune may bring you among us once more. If I am not here I shall be in the country, and I hope you will come to me there, for my house shall be ever ready to receive you."

MADAME ALBANI has arrived in New York.

FOR two reasons the death of Lord Leighton must not pass unnoticed in these pages. He was the first President of the Royal Academy who had "Music" and "The Drama" included in the list of toasts at the annual dinner of that institution—in other words, at the most splendidly representative of all English social gatherings. As Sir Arthur Sullivan remarks, "the liberal and generous view which Lord Leighton took of the equality of all arts was a dominant feature in his many-sided character."

MADAME MODJESKA has had a serious illness at Cincinnati, but is now recovering.

ACCORDING to the New York *Evening Sun*, at a dinner party given in honour of Miss Sybil Sanderson, the hostess turning to the *prima donna*, remarked, "Do you know, the jewels you wear in *Manon* are the most beautiful I have ever seen." "Good heavens," whispered Miss Sanderson; "you surely didn't think they were real, did you? I should have had to be dreadfully naughty to get them."

WE can state that the present will be the last year of Mr. Tree's tenancy of the Haymarket, as he intends to build a large theatre on the site of Her Majesty's. Before long, we understand, he will play Falstaff in the First Part of *Henry IV*.

MR. PINERO is understood to be writing a piece for the Court Theatre.

THE production of the new Gilbert-Sullivan opera has been retarded by the success of *The Mikado*, but will take place in a few days.

MR. HARE, who is continuing to meet with marked success in America in *A Pair of Spectacles*, was lately the guest in New York of the Lotos Club, which he enlivened with imitations and stories of Signor Salvini. At a



London dinner, we are told, the tragedian, not knowing English, spoke in his native tongue. An Italian friend, whose English was very bad, stood up beside him to act as interpreter. Of the florid periods of Salvini and the half unintelligible utterances of the other, Mr. Hare, as a clever mimic, naturally made a good deal.

THE Lotos Club, it may be remarked in passing, has a charm peculiar to itself. "Its bohemianism," we are rightly told, "is tempered with decorum, and at these delightful affairs neither guests nor members are offended by the ribald incidents that mark the entertainments of certain clubs whose atmosphere is highly charged with professionalism."

It may be taken for granted that Sir Augustus Harris will utilise Drury Lane for a short season of English and Italian opera during the interval between the termination of the pantomime run and the beginning of the Covent Garden season, which starts, as usual, about the middle of May. In view of this, the impresario made one or two engagements before he went "artist-hunting" last month in the neighbourhood of the Riviera and Northern Italy. He is also associated with the coming production at the Opéra Comique Theatre of Professor Stanford's new light romantic opera, *Shamus O'Brien*, which is being looked forward to with a good deal of interest. The idea of using Le Fanu's popular ballad for the groundwork of a comic opera was distinctly happy.

MR. TOOLE will not be seen again at the theatre in King William-street, the London County Council refusing to renew the licence unless alterations involving an outlay of £4,000 or £5,000 are effected, and the governors of the adjacent hospital, to whom the property belongs, not seeing their way to incur such expenditure.

MR. GEORGE RIGNOLD has arrived in London from Australia, and is likely to appear before us in the Biblical play *Joseph of Canaan*.

MR. FORBES ROBERTSON replied to the toast of the Drama at the twelfth annual dinner of the Playgoers Club, held at the Criterion on January 26, Mr. Edward Rose taking the chair. He defended the problem play, which, he said, had widened our horizon. One passage in his speech may have had particular significance. "I would ask," he said, "dramatic authors continually to remind themselves that a play is not finished, not complete, when the last word is written at the desk. A play must have an audience, must be acted, or it is no play; and it is my conviction that, however gifted and experienced an author may be, it is only by the heartiest co-operation with the manager and the actor that he can hope to win an artistic success. I know how dear to him in his study are those graceful lines that read so well; on the stage they must either be changed or deleted." Was *Michael and His Lost Angel* in the speaker's mind at that moment?

MR. AND MRS. KENDAL have gone on another provincial tour, which they began at Portsmouth on the 10th of February.

It is believed that Mr. Kipling is at work on a play dealing with the adventures of a nautch girl.

MR. WILSON BARRETT evidently founds great hopes upon the present vogue of *The Sign of the Cross*, for he has cancelled his touring arrangements for this year and next, and postponed his next visit to America, which was to have begun in the autumn. In the provinces, Mr. H. B. Irving will play Marcus Superbus (who ought, it has been unkindly suggested, to be re-christened Marcus Suburbanus), while the part of Mercia will be intrusted to Miss Lillah McCarthy, a clever young actress, who has only been on the professional stage for about a year.

To follow *The Professor's Love Story*, Mr. Willard has in hand a fresh version of Mr. H. A. Jones's capital little play, *The Deacon*. The author is understood to be writing a third act to it, and otherwise filling out the scheme, which originally included only four characters, and was in two acts. Mr. Jones has been singularly unlucky with his last two efforts.

MR. CLEMENT SCOTT continues to act as Mr. Daly's champion and defender in the various newspapers to which he contributes theatrical articles. Speaking of the intended production of the two parts of *Henry IV.* rolled into one, with Miss Rehan as Prince Hal, Mr. Scott wrote in the *Daily Telegraph* :—"It is to be hoped that we shall hear no more of that ungenerous and illiberal spirit which protests against the production of Shakspearean plays at any theatre that is not managed by an Englishman." Of this spirit we cannot remember noting any traces. Certainly *The Theatre* has not shown it. If Mr. Scott hopes to hear no more protests against Mr. Daly's mutilations of Shakspeare, we fear he is doomed to disappointment.

In this matter *The Theatre* is now very far from standing alone. From many quarters whence opinions worth listening to are expected, we hear remonstrances similar to those made in our pages. Take the following as an instance—a paragraph from the *Sketch* :—"An American manager—who has before distinguished himself by collaborating with Shakspeare, much to that immortal's detriment—is reported to have calmly telescoped the first and second parts of *Henry IV.* into one play, and is going to allow his leading lady to represent Prince Hal! This, if true, is surely a more solid grievance on which to go to war with America than the boundary of Venezuela. I have, in the distant past, seen Hamlet played by a woman—I believe it was by Miss Marriott in the early 'sixties; I have seen Romeo murdered in broken English by a foreign lady called Vestouli, and very distressing and unnatural performances they were; but Prince Hal to be played by a clever American *comédienne* out-Herods Herod! Seriously, it is time Mr. Daly gave up making patchwork of Shakspeare, and that leading ladies ceased to play male parts except in burlesque."

In the same article from which we have quoted above, Mr. Scott goes on to inform us that Mr. Daly "has worked as hard for dramatic art in its highest altitude as any man living. He edits Shakspeare for the stage as all sensible managers do, and what is sauce for the goose ought to be sauce for the gander." We can only express regret that Mr. Daly, after all his hard work, has met with so little success in his attempts to benefit "dramatic art in its highest altitude." Suppose he were to leave it alone for a little while, to see how it managed to get on without his aid? Our quarrel with Mr. Daly is not that he edits Shakspeare for the stage, but that he edits without reverence or discretion or care for the poetical side of the plays. If any English manager mauled Shakspeare as Mr. Daly has done, and proposes to go on doing, Mr. Scott would find an equally vehement protest raised as has been raised in the case of one who happens to hail from America. This Mr. Scott must know perfectly well; and his attempt to represent that Mr. Daly's nationality has anything to do with the case is simply nonsense.

THE new piece at Daly's Theatre in New York, *The Countess Gucki*, is proving so successful that *Henry IV.* (by A. Daly and W. Shakspeare) is not likely to be produced there this season at all. It is quite ready for American playgoers, but will probably be seen for the first time in London

during this summer, unless Mr. Daly changes his mind. The casting of Miss Rehan for the part of Prince Hal recalls the fact that at the Haymarket Theatre in 1786 a certain Mrs. Webb attempted the part of Falstaff. The misguided woman—her only qualification for the attempt was her corporeal enormity—had a very bad reception, and the experiment was not repeated.

A STRANGE incident is reported to have taken place one night at the Adelphi Theatre during the "degradation" scene in *One of the Best*. A lady in a box, after witnessing the disgrace of the young lieutenant, the hero of the play, fainted away. This lady is said to have been the wife of Captain Dreyfus, whose trial, sentence, and degradation in Paris last year attracted so much notice, and probably suggested to the authors of the piece their most telling episode. She is stated to have come to London in order to see *One of the Best*, but very good authority is required to obtain credence for so unlikely a rumour.

So enduring is the attractiveness of *The Chili Widow* that it is now expected to run through the season, in which case no new production is likely to take place at the Royalty until next winter has begun its course. For, when people have left town for their autumn holidays, the fascinating widow will take a journey across the Atlantic, and will spend enough time in New York to establish the sway she holds so firmly over playgoers in this country. Mr. Bouchier will take all his London company over with him, leaving the provincial companies, which are now starting on their travels, to represent him during his absence. The idea of a Sunday performance in Paris has not been abandoned, though certain difficulties have to be got over before plans can be definitely settled. So popular is the idea in Paris that no fewer than three theatres have been offered to Mr. Bouchier for his enterprise.

MR. CARTWRIGHT and Mr. Dana have dissolved their partnership, with the result that the Duke of York's Theatre will be in the hands of a syndicate including Mr. Sedger and Mr. Levenston.

MR. HENRI VAN LAUN, who died towards the end of January, will long be missed. Like another Dutchman domiciled here, Mr. Herman de Lange, he was a master of both English and French, and his translation of Molière was as successful as any such work could well be.

MR. OSCAR BARRETT was recently entertained by the Edinburgh Pen and Pencil Club, and, in responding to the toast of his health, said there was no reason why pantomime should not be treated with the same care and taste as opera itself. The Lyceum *Cinderella*, among other things, showed that his practice is not unequal to his theory.

THE London County Council are ready enough in enforcing the regulations for keeping clear the gangways in theatres. Why, it may be asked, are not such regulations applied to churches? We were lately reminded that at St. Margaret's, Westminster, the aisles and the nave were blocked up with chairs, and that the Rev. H. R. Haweis, according to his own testimony, has more than doubled the number of free seats at St. James's, Marylebone, by means of chairs, camp-stools, and slabs. Look, too, at the state of Westminster Abbey when a popular preacher is in the pulpit. Such a practice, of course, is incompatible both with safety and with health, and if followed in a theatre or music hall would mean the loss of his licence to the manager. Why does not the London County Council bestir itself in the matter? It may not have a very keen sense of equity, but at least might be expected to do its obvious duty.



THE latest *sociétaires* of the Théâtre Français are Mlles. Brandés and Du Minil, MM. Leitner and Raphael Duflos. These elections have met with general approval in Paris.

THE recent performances of *Lohengrin* in Paris have, as might be expected, revived all the latent Wagnerism to which the average Frenchman is subject; and this, in its turn, has called forth the powers of all the small wits who delight to make the Wagner worshipper their butt. We hear of a wonderful cure of a stone-deaf man who was advised by his doctor to take a stall for *Lohengrin* close to the orchestra, near the trombones. The doctor, who confidently expected the success of his prescription, took a seat beside his patient, so as to be present at the crucial moment. About half-way through the opera the patient shouted, "Doctor, doctor! I can hear, I am cured!" The doctor, apparently absorbed in the music, took no notice. "Doctor," repeated the man in great excitement, "you have saved me; I can hear plainly." Still the doctor was silent. He had become deaf himself.

M. COQUELIN will shortly revive M. Sardou's *Thermidon* at the Porte St. Martin, with two new scenes by the author.

*Salomé* has been played at the Théâtre de l'Œuvre, Paris. It was well received, Mlle. Lina Munte, in the chief part, being superb. As for the work itself, its style is not new in the country of Flaubert.

SIGNOR MASCAGNI, as we have already announced, has written for an Italian review an article on musical critics. He has nothing to say in their favour, however much they may have done to extend his fame. "As vinegar is only wine gone wrong, so musical critics are only musical composers gone astray, and that is why I cannot stand the former at table and the latter in the theatre." He considers a critic a *maestro mancato*, a failure as a composer. He would make the critics mere reporters, the public being left to judge for themselves.

SIGNOR VERDI'S *Falstaff*, with M. Victor Maurel in the chief part, seems to have captured public fancy at the Opera House, New York.

It is understood that a Passion Play will shortly be produced in New York, after a preliminary trial at Montreal. Everything will be in pantomime in the right acceptation of the term, no words being spoken. Unexpectedly enough, the clergy are disposed to favour rather than disfavour the enterprise.

By a curious coincidence, *Michael and His Lost Angel* was produced and withdrawn in London and New York almost on the same nights.

MR. J. E. DODSON was entertained at dinner by the Lotos Club on February 2, and was presented with a loving-cup in token of the admiration in which he is held in New York. One of the speakers was Mr. Bronson Howard, who remarked that England might keep a slice of Venezuela if she left them their guest.

SIR HENRY IRVING and Mr. Jefferson, who are close friends, met recently at New Orleans, and were often to be seen out together. The latter took advantage of his visit to deliver his lecture on the drama to the girls at Newcomb College, who attended in large numbers. Speaking of the ideal and real, he cited *King Arthur* as a glorious example of a poetic play poetically produced. The perfection of the illusion could not be surpassed. He defended the drama in general, holding that it was better now than it had ever been.



"THE THEATRE," APRIL, 1896.



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MR. CHARLES WYNDHAM

*As DAVID GARRICK.*



# THE THEATRE.

APRIL, 1896.

## Our Watch Tower.

### THE CRITICISM OF THE *DAILY TELEGRAPH*.



ALTHOUGH members of the theatrical profession in England would have us believe that they always ignore press criticisms, there is, nevertheless, it is said, at least one newspaper of which they are diligent, not to say anxious, readers. That journal seems to be the *Daily Telegraph*, for which, rumour asserts, not only actors, but managers, have a profound veneration. If a group of actors in a club-house is seen eagerly bending over a daily print, that print, it is shrewdly suspected, will be found to be the *Daily Telegraph*. As for the managers, it is understood that at most of the metropolitan theatres a box is reserved on first-nights for the representative of the journal in question, while one stall, or perhaps a couple of stalls, is thought good enough for the representatives of such journals as *The Times*, the *Standard*, the *Daily News*, and so forth. If this be the case, the inference is obvious: special store is laid upon the judgment which may be passed by the *Daily Telegraph* upon a play. Its approval is the most desired, its disapproval the most dreaded.

It may be useful to consider for a moment whether, assuming this worship of the *Daily Telegraph* to be a fact, there are any grounds for its existence. Is the *Daily Telegraph* really the Jupiter of the theatrical firmament? Are its deliverances final? Do its smiles mean life, its frowns mean death? Are its judgments decisive, and not to be appealed against? In other words, is it as irresistible with the public as with the players, playwrights, and play-promoters who are said to bow before it? The question is not merely whether certain plays praised

by the *Daily Telegraph* have succeeded while certain plays dispraised by it have failed. The plays praised by it may have been praised by the remainder of the press; the plays dispraised by it may have been dispraised by its contemporaries. To account for the abject prostration on the part of the theatrical profession, of which gossip speaks, we must assume that the *Daily Telegraph* is really Jupiter-like in its decrees—that, these once formulated, there is no escape from them—that they carry with them, whenever they are pronounced, prosperity or destruction. If, when the *Daily Telegraph* applauds, it does but applaud with others, or if, when it condemns, it does but condemn in company, then there can be no special property or value in its condemnation or its applause. To be worthy of the incense which, we are told, is offered up to it by managers and actors, it must be able, by its good word, to assure success, or, by its bad word, to ensure failure.

Now, is this the case? Is it the fact that the verdict of the *Daily Telegraph* is necessarily the verdict of the public? Is that journal really omnipotent? Is it actually the dictator of the English stage? Has it more power than all the other newspapers put together, or than even a majority of the other newspapers? Let us glance back at the history of the London stage during the past twelvemonth—say from March 1st, 1895, to March 1st, 1896—and see whether, during that period, which will do as well as any other for the purposes of our inquiry, the praises and dispraises of the *Daily Telegraph* have invariably brought with them, respectively, triumph or disaster. †

To begin with, did the *Daily Telegraph's* approval of *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* obtain for that drama the blessing of a long run? *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* was described by the *Daily Telegraph* as “Unquestionably the masterpiece, as yet, of Arthur Wing Pinero. . . . The play that resulted in so splendid a success for Mr. John Hare is, to our thinking, head and shoulders above *Mrs. Tanqueray* in analysis, in excellence of dialogue, in profundity of thought, and in rare chances for always clever, sometimes extraordinary, acting.” “All playgoing London,” we were told, “will be off to visit” *Mrs. Ebbsmith*; the play was one which, “whether we like it or not, everyone must see, study, and weigh in the balance. . . . It is a tragedy, and a very fine one.” Nevertheless, *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* ran only from March 13th to May 11th, and from May 15th to June 14th; practically for three months, which is not what an author or a manager—notably a Pinero or a Hare—understands usually by a “splendid success.” Again, when *The Benefit of the Doubt* was brought out at the Comedy, the *Daily Telegraph* assured its

readers that Mr. Pinero had "held his own"—that he had "ably sustained his unassailed position as a dramatist and a thinker of to-day." He "possesses," we were told, "the rare art of holding and interesting his audience." *The Benefit of the Doubt*, we were assured, was "a clever play;" "up to the last act, it may safely be declared to be one of the cleverest and most effective comedies that Mr. Pinero has ever written. And it is from first to last superbly acted—with earnestness, with passion, and with truth." Notwithstanding all this, *The Benefit of the Doubt*, produced on October 17th, was withdrawn on December 21st, after an existence of a little over two months.

We find, again, that the *Daily Telegraph* pronounced *The Blue Boar* of Messrs. Parker and Carson to be "a charming farce, placed in a charming scene." Unhappily, the piece ran only from March 23rd to April 20th—*i.e.*, rather less than a month. Of *The Girl I Left Behind Me*, the *Daily Telegraph* said that it was "wholesome, exhilarating, and absorbing," "excellent, interesting, stirring;" but, for all that, it ran only from April 13th to August 10th, which, for an Adelphi melodrama, is not a long career. With Mr. Daly's revival of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the *Daily Telegraph*, one remembers, was delighted. "Mr. Augustin Daly," it wrote, "is a magician of the stage. . . . Miss Ada Rehan's Julia is, to our mind, one of the finest things she has done. . . . A play so well thought out and executed as this deserves to succeed." Unluckily, notwithstanding the advantage of the *Daily Telegraph's* eulogies, it ran only from July 2nd to July 8th—which Mr. Daly can hardly have considered an adequate return for all his labours. Over *Her Advocate*, produced at the Duke of York's Theatre on September 26th, the *Daily Telegraph* waxed enthusiastic. "In a few days'—nay, in a few hours'—time," it wrote, "all London will be ringing with the praise of Mr. Walter Frith's new play. . . . Since *The Bells* was produced we have had no more powerful play of its class. . . . It is certain that Conan Doyle never excited anyone more in the library than Mr. Walter Frith has managed to do in the theatre. . . . It is one of the best plays of its kind that have been seen for some time, having two strong recommendations—interest and heart." Strong language like this would have meant, one would have thought, an exceptionally long life for *Her Advocate*; but, as a matter of fact, it was performed for the last time on November 30th, a little more than two months after the appearance of these praises.

Another play to which the *Daily Telegraph* was kind was *The Rise of Dick Halward*, of which it declared that "the life's romance which Mr. Jerome K. Jerome unfolds with such tender-



ness and skill appeals to the finer feelings and knocks loudly at the gates of the heart." "These delightful scenes," said the *Daily Telegraph*, further on, "as acted by Mr. Willard and Miss Marion Terry, are the costly and delicate material of which the play is made." "The new play was very heartily welcomed, and will win public attention on account of the interest of the story and the very welcome art of Mr. Willard and Miss Marion Terry." This was on October 21st. On November 8th *Dick Halward* stopped knocking at the gates of the heart, and ceased to appeal to the finer feelings. Later on, the *Daily Telegraph* had an encouraging word to say for a revival—this time of a comedy by Sheridan. Of *The Rivals*, as produced by Mr. Chudleigh at the Court, the *Daily Telegraph* declared that "The good old play went off admirably. It is worth seeing again and again for the sake of Mrs. John Wood and Mr. William Farren." Comparatively few people, however, can have seen this piece "again and again," for, produced on November 11th, it was withdrawn on December 21st; so that here, once more, the recommendation of the *Daily Telegraph* went, apparently, for very little.

In the same way with *The Late Mr. Castello* at the Comedy. The *Daily Telegraph* honoured that play with two notices, in the second of which it asserted that "there are very few brighter or better-written plays to be seen at the moment." The comedy was described as consisting of "three acts of refined fun." "We have here," said the *Daily Telegraph*, "a little gem of a play." "The intrigue, such as it is, shows delicate handling, the characters are all drawn with a firm hand, and the humour is pungent and appetising." These glowing sentences appeared on January 13th, 1896. Nevertheless, the comedy went out of the bill on February 20th, after a run of eight weeks only.

It would seem from these instances that, contrary to the apparent belief of many excellent people, the patronage of the *Daily Telegraph* is not sufficient in itself to command prosperity for a dramatic production. Let us now look at the other side of the shield, and inquire whether the disapprobation of the *Daily Telegraph* is invariably fatal to its object.

Going back to April of last year, we find the *Daily Telegraph* seemingly attributing the favourable reception of Mr. Godfrey's *Vanity Fair* solely to the exertions made in its favour by Mrs. John Wood. "The fact that the new play was received without one dissentient sound," said the *Daily Telegraph*, "may be put down to the heroic endeavours of the actress, who determined to win, and won hands down." Enormous, indeed, must be the ability and popularity of Mrs. Wood, for *Vanity Fair* ran from

April 27th to July 24th, and from September 23rd to November 2nd—*i.e.*, for over four months—in spite of the *Daily Telegraph's* opinion of its literary and dramatic merits. We have a still more impressive example in the case of *The Passport*, concerning which the *Daily Telegraph* maintained that “two playwrights of experience have scarcely hit the mark.” “Their farce,” it went on, “does not lack its points of good workmanship, nor does their dialogue fall short in the matter of neatness and a fair measure of humour. Where, however, we find *The Passport* wanting is in the absence of a happy central figure or idea. . . . The spectacle of a lady continuously at a loss for a word, and proving herself in every action the victim of—to put it mildly—a certain degree of mental weakness, is not in itself a thing to provoke unrestrained mirth.” However this may be, the fact remains that *The Passport*, brought out on April 25th, continued to amuse audiences until August 24th—that is to say, for four months, which is not a bad record for an unpretending bit of comedy.

The *Daily Telegraph* was not particularly well pleased, one remembers, with *The Home Secretary*. It characterised that work as “one of the most puzzling plays that have recently been presented to the public judgment.” “For three acts out of the four allotted to *The Home Secretary*,” it proceeded, “the finest expert in the audience cannot make head or tail of the author's plan or intention. Until the last act came, who could possibly be interested in *The Home Secretary*? . . . There was never such a mixture of modern comedy and old-fashioned high-falutin' bombast in any recent play.” The public reply to all this was unmistakable. At the Criterion and at the Shaftesbury the piece ran altogether for over three months, in addition to a successful tour in the country. We have referred above to the *Daily Telegraph's* hearty approval of Mr. Daly's revival of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, which had only eight performances. It so happens that of Mr. Daly's revival of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* the *Daily Telegraph* wrote much less gushingly. The best it could say for the representation was that it was “a very pretty and well-considered reading of Shakspeare's charming pastoral.” Miss Ada Rehan, it held, was “wasted on Helena.” Nevertheless the revival ran from July 9th to July 27th—which, at any rate, was a considerably longer life than was enjoyed by the other revival, of which the *Daily Telegraph* had spoken much more favourably.

Of *Alabama*, with which Mr. Willard opened the Garrick on September 3rd, the *Daily Telegraph* had but a poor opinion. It thought it “soporific.” “It is not a play; it is scarcely a

charade. . . . It failed to create interest because it was undramatic and deadly dull." Nevertheless, it contrived to keep alive till October 12th. Five weeks is not a long career, but it is better than the summary extinction which usually befalls a play which is "deadly dull and undramatic." Again, the *Daily Telegraph's* disapproval of Messrs. Forbes Robertson and Frederick Harrison's production of *Romeo and Juliet* did not compel those gentlemen at once to close their doors. The journal admitted that the revival was "bound to please and be popular—it is Shakspeare, and that is enough for playgoing people," but it scarcely encouraged the public to flock to the Lyceum. It said of the *Romeo*, the *Juliet*, the *Mercutio*, the *Friar*, and the *Nurse* that they were "all fashioned in the nineteenth century, but somehow or other they didn't succeed in getting under the skin of Shakspeare's creations. The glamour of poetry had vanished; the ghost of tragedy had disappeared." A severe condemnation; and yet the revival managed to exist till December 21st, when it was withdrawn after a three months' run, and (we believe) while still attracting large audiences—a proof, surely, that not even the disapprobation of the *Daily Telegraph* can keep all play-lovers out of a theatre.

What the *Daily Telegraph* said of *Trilby* when it was produced at the Haymarket will be generally recollected. The work was characterised as "a fairly telling"—only "fairly telling"—"melodramatic play." "Mr. George Du Maurier," the critic opined, "must have wept tears of blood when he found the delicacy of his romance ruined alike by dramatist and artist." As a matter of fact, Mr. Du Maurier has assured the world that he did not weep at all—so he could not have wept tears of blood—at the representation of *Trilby*, with which he was well pleased. On the day following its notice of *Trilby*, the *Daily Telegraph* observed: "We have never known a theosophistic, Mahatmaistic, spiritualistic, or hypnotic drama to succeed when treated seriously"—and yet *Trilby*, which is a hypnotic drama, has been drawing crowded houses at the Haymarket since November 1st, 1895. On the 4th of November, reviewing *Mrs. Ponderbury's Past*, the *Daily Telegraph* remarked that, "In our time we have seen hundreds of good farces ruined by bad acting. Here, we fear, is another case in point." But (accepting for the moment the statement about "bad acting") this was *not* a case in point. *Mrs. Ponderbury's Past* was not "ruined." It ran at the Avenue from November 2nd to January 25th, notwithstanding the "bad acting" of which the journal spoke.

Lastly, and not least remarkably, there is the strange case of the musical piece called *The New Barmaid*. Of this, produced



on February 13th, 1896, the *Daily Telegraph* said bluntly that it was "trash"—that it was "atrociously vulgar and a most unwelcome guest." "We should not be surprised," it continued, "if *The New Barmaid* received a month's warning." So far, however, was this from being the case that, at the moment of our going to press, *The New Barmaid* is still at the Avenue, and still, to all appearance, flourishing in her situation.

We have shown, we think, that the *Daily Telegraph* cannot lay claim (and, so far as we know, it does not lay claim) to the omnipotence apparently ascribed to it by its indiscriminating admirers. We have shown that neither its praise nor its dispraise determines, in every instance, the fate of a dramatic production. We have no wish to minimise unduly its influence as an organ of opinion. Of course a newspaper possessing so large a circulation as the *Daily Telegraph* enjoys must needs have a certain effect upon the public mind. All that we have attempted to establish is the fact (as we believe it to be) that that effect (as regards matters pertaining to the stage and drama) is, and has been, much over-estimated. If it be true that there are persons, actors and managers, who regard the applause of the *Daily Telegraph* as all-saving, and its condemnation as all-destructive, then we invite them to study the examples to the contrary which we have here brought together—examples drawn from one year's record only, and with every anxiety to be fair and accurate. From these alone they should be able to deduce the lesson that there is no need to prostrate themselves before the supposed god of their idolatry.

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## Portraits.

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### MR. CHARLES WYNDHAM.

THE most interesting theatrical event of this month of April will be the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of Mr. Wyndham's first appearance at the Criterion, the theatre with which his name must always be connected in the minds of playgoers and in the annals of our English stage. For twenty years both the player and the playhouse have enjoyed a unique position. As a light comedian, mercurial of temperament, delicate of touch, excelling in the representation of feather-headed, irresponsible characters whose difficulties move us only to good-tempered merriment, Mr. Wyndham is without a rival. As an actor skilled to strike a deeper note, to thrill an audience with the chords of pathos, tenderness, and self-oblivion, he stands not so pre-eminent, it is true, but still among the few who have, within the limits they observe, touched the highest levels reached by dramatic art in the nineteenth century.

It was not without a struggle against the destiny mapped out for him that Mr. Wyndham adopted the stage as a profession. It was not without encountering difficulties and ill-fortune that he succeeded in holding his own when his decision had been taken. He was educated with a view to his becoming a doctor, and in the American Civil War he actually served as a surgeon in the Federal Army, having taken his degree shortly before the outbreak of hostilities. But he had no intention of remaining in the Army, and at Washington, in 1864, he made his first appearance on the stage, under the management of Mrs. John Wood. His short experience was of a most unfortunate character. At a certain point in the play he had a love-scene to go through, which he was to begin with some such words as—"Dearest, I am drunk with that enthusiasm of love which but once in a lifetime fills the soul of man." All that nervousness and the hilariousness of his audience permitted the young actor to say was—"Dearest, I am drunk." The theatre resounded with shouts of laughter; the scene came to an abrupt conclusion, and the *New York Herald* remarked that "Mr. Wyndham, who represented a young man from South America, had better go back there himself." And, in point of fact, back Mr. Wyndham went. Two years later, however, he made a more successful attempt, and this time the career was begun which has continued so brilliantly ever since. The spring of 1866 found him a

member of Miss Patty Oliver's company at the Royalty, and in the following year he created an excellent impression at the opening of the New Queen's Theatre, in Long-acre. Here he remained until 1869, gaining experience in company with such comrades as Mr. Irving, Mr. Toole, Mr. Lionel Brough, and the late Mr. John Clayton. The years 1873 and 1874, following upon his visit to America, where he first appeared as Charles Surface, saw his earliest impersonations of two famous characters in his repertoire—Rover in *Wild Oats* and Bob Sackett in *Brighton*—while in 1877 came the opening of the Criterion with Albery's much-discussed version of *Les Dominos Roses*. By this time Mr. Wyndham's reputation as a comic actor of singularly vivacious humour was firmly established, and for the next ten years he continued to add to it by producing a series of volatile comedies, most of them adapted from the French. *Fourteen Days*, *The Great Divorce Case*, *The Candidate*, may be taken as examples of this class of piece, and the Criterion seemed to have become exclusively the house of the frivolous, and too often of the "thin-ice" drama, when in 1886 Mr. Wyndham won laurels in a different line by establishing his claim to be regarded as Sothorn's legitimate successor in *David Garrick*, and followed up the run of more than two years which his superb acting gained for the play by appearing as the sombre John Mildmay in *Still Waters Run Deep*. Since this period the parts in which Mr. Wyndham has been seen to most advantage have given to his more serious talent nearly as much opportunity as to his purely comic powers. His good acting in *The Bauble Shop* secured a measure of success for a poor play, while *The Case of Rebellious Susan*, though one of Mr. Jones's cleverest pieces, yet owed much to Mr. Wyndham's admirable comedy. *The Squire of Dames*, yet another adaptation, provided the Criterion manager with an excellent part, and like many another play, has been successful for this reason.

We have left ourselves small space in which to speak of Mr. Wyndham's triumphs beyond seas. He can not only boast of having played in Russia, but he is one of the very few English actors who have appeared before German audiences and appealed to them by speaking their own tongue. In America he has long been a favourite. It need not be added that in private life he is as popular with his profession as he is in his public capacity with London and provincial playgoers. The long list of those who are to assist him on the occasion of the Criterion celebration, and the still longer list of those who would be only too glad to do so if the programme could escape limitations of time and space, speak on this point more forcibly than words.



## The Round Table.

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### MARCHING TO OUR DOOM.

BY SYDNEY GRUNDY.

IF my article of last month has done nothing else, it has evoked from Mr. Archer the three most human columns he has ever contributed to the *World*. But I think it has done something more. I think it has brought into bold relief the fact that the new school has nothing to reply to the old in defence of analysis against action, chaos against form. Certainly it has cleared the atmosphere. For my own part, I feel very much better, since I accused Mr. Shaw of too prolonged a contemplation of Scandinavian stove-pipes; and I have no doubt that Mr. Archer feels similarly relieved after telling me that I "vulgarised the talent" of Miss Winifred Emery.\*

Human as Mr. Archer's article is, it has the defects of its qualities. It is easy to sneer at "machine-made French intrigues," but it is difficult to answer the unanswerable. Mr. Archer prudently makes no attempt. He does not even deign to give his readers an inkling of what the argument is. He appropriates to himself some epithets which were certainly not intended for him—a most human weakness—and reads me solemn lectures on the danger of "marking time"—an excellent thing to do, when one is on the brink of a precipice—and on the importance of encouraging young authors. By all means! But when he implies that I have written a word in the opposite sense he is guilty of disingenuousness, and is simply talking to the reporters. What on earth have young authors to do with it? What has *Delia Harding* to do with it? I never defended *Delia Harding*. What has *Gossip* to do with it? If it comes to that, what has his whole article to do with it?

Mr. Archer and others protest that I exaggerate his influence. I don't think I do. Granted his direct effect on the playgoer is practically *nil*; he exerts that greatest of authority, the influence of influences. I can remember the time when he sang a solo amongst

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\* Dear Archer,—It was not I who made that charming lady intoxicated it was that rascal Pinero.—S. G.

the critics ; now there is a chorus. There is no doubt about it whether we like it or not, Mr. Archer has been a great success. And his influence, checked by others, has been largely beneficent. He has "widened our horizon." In my opinion, since Mr. Scott's achievements in the days of theatrical darkness—achievements for which, because we have differed, even fought, on other points, he eyes my gratitude askance—no critic has done greater service to the English stage than Mr. Archer. He has affected his brother critics enormously, even Mr. Scott, opposite as are their points of view—the Mr. Scott of to-day is not the Mr. Scott of ten years ago ; he has undoubtedly influenced Mr. Pinero—though Mr. Pinero reads only the *Mining Journal*, be it remembered that journal consists largely of "quotations ;" he has to some extent influenced Mr. Jones ; and if he has not much influenced me, it is only because, for three-fourths of the way, we were agreed, to start with. But the devout believer is apt to develop into the fanatic ; and the time comes when the reformer has himself to be reformed.

Prominently amongst Mr. Archer's small points—of connected reasoning I can find no trace in his article—he resents my description of *The Benefit of the Doubt* as "a mere study of character." He cites this expression as though it were my final judgment on that clever work. This is misleading. I did not presume to criticise, but to classify it, strictly for the purpose of my ignored argument, relatively to *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* ; and I adhere to my classification. This is no reflection on Mr. Pinero's workmanship. *The Benefit of the Doubt* is what it is, because Mr. Pinero intended it to be so. It was not by accident that so accomplished a craftsman grouped together no less than thirteen admirable characters (excluding servants), only four, or at most five, of whom had any organic connection with his plot. It was a deliberate defiance of accepted methods. *The Benefit of the Doubt* is a family group ; *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* is a play.

But, to come to the gist of the matter. In illustration of my suggestion that, "as the modern serious play becomes less and less a play and more and more a study of character, its popularity is declining," in common justice to my adversaries I instanced the very best and most successful examples to my hand. Alas for justice ! Mr. Archer retorts by searching his memory for three of the least typical or least successful examples of the "well-made" play ; and, effectually to embarrass me, he selects three of my own. This unworthy manœuvre is greeted with a shout of applause by that section of the press whose tactics for the nonce he has borrowed. I struck him from the shoulder ; he counters with his boot. Even his friend Mr. Shaw blushes.

With amazing irrelevance, and even a spice of feminine malice eminently uncharacteristic of Mr. Archer, he asks for the returns of *The Late Mr. Castello*. I am unable to oblige him, for this sufficient reason: I regard the communication of returns to the press as a gross breach of confidence. In the case of *Michael and His Lost Angel*, I believe, there were extenuating circumstances; in my case there would be none. Moreover, Mr. Archer has conclusively proved that his genius is not financial, and does not shine in the interpretation of returns; and, inasmuch as *The Late Mr. Castello* is a farce, or, at most, an eccentric comedy, it has no more bearing on this discussion than has Drury Lane pantomime. Otherwise, I am quite prepared to defend that adventure in my "gloriously aleatory calling." But it is not germane to the issue. What is to the point is the measure of success attained by two of the most earnest efforts of the first dramatist of the day, working on what I contend are wrong principles. What he can do on other principles we all know. Mr. Archer, ignoring the country, ignoring America, ignoring the wide world, except his little spot upon this planet; ignoring Mrs. Patrick Campbell as an attraction, yet ascribing disaster to Miss Nethersole; ignoring, possibly not understanding, my reference to library deals; ignoring press "booms" which happened, and imagining one which did not; ignoring Mr. Pinero's reputation; ignoring everything that concerns the ascertainment of the truth, pretends to believe that a run of fifty or sixty nights to fine business is a satisfying success for such an author! And how does he make this out? *The Late Mr. Castello*—a farce, written by a vulgarian—drew even less. *Pro pudor!*

Mr. Archer knows, nobody better, that the comparison is futile. If he is in earnest, let him compare the result of these, the most successful of all the excursions into his kingdom, with the world-wide popularity of Mr. Pinero's *Sweet Lavender*. If, for some mysterious reason, the play must be mine, let him instance that "mechanical rabbit," *Sowing the Wind*, which has been running about the earth uninterruptedly for exactly two years and a half, and has failed only in my native city. If he prefers an adaptation, let him consider that most mechanical of machines, *A Pair of Spectacles*, which has been going for more years than I can remember. It is not I who am responsible for this egotism; it is you, Mr. Archer, who have been unchivalrous.

Come now, confront the truth. Excepting *Mrs. Tanqueray*, whom we both claim—though one of us does not like the lady's profession—can you point to a single play, fashioned on your lines, which has ever been more than an ephemeral success in the



English-speaking world? You can't claim Mr. Jones. Mr. Jones is the most practical of artists. In his most daring departures he has always kept an eye on romance and melodrama. On my side, I point to every great success that has ever been achieved.

Brought to bay, Mr. Archer admits that success is essential. He is exactly where I am, on the economical question. I am as "scornful" as I was sixteen years ago of "the theory that it is a critic's business to estimate the 'money in' a play," or to prognosticate its fate. I think "a critic is bound in the first place to consider each individual play as a work of art, not as an article of commerce; but, in the second place, to give earnest study and thought to the economic conditions of the theatre as a whole, and to regulate his general policy in reasonable accord with them." I have no objection whatever to Mr. Archer acting on this excellent principle, and I applaud him in his endeavour to elevate popular taste; but when the serious play of modern life is threatened with temporary extinction, when, as a matter of fact, there is not one such play being acted on the London stage, I maintain that it is time for practical playwrights to consider the economic conditions of that type of drama as a whole, and to regulate their general policy accordingly. When I argued that, "if the public is thoughtless and vulgar, thoughtlessness and vulgarity are the factors of the problem which we have to solve," I did not propose that the solution should be an ignoble one. I do not believe that the comparatively select public which attends serious plays is thoughtless; on the contrary, unlike Mr. Buchanan, I consider it, though of course imperfect, the most satisfactory tribunal we can possibly get. My "fretful" argument is that we must face the facts, whatever they are; and that plays too far in advance of public taste are, like legislation too far in advance of public opinion, a dead letter.

So much for Mr. Archer. He is humanly discursive; the *Stage* is to the point. After the usual burlesque of my position, the *Stage* concludes by stating it seriously—as its own. "The tendency in modern drama is to get action through character" is surely a slip of the pen? That is what the tendency ought to be; that is the well-made play—action through character. The tendency in modern drama is to get character alone. But what follows is no slip: "No dramatist can set his figures on the stage psychologically and dramatically without the subtlest organic form." Precisely; "organic form" is essential. Nobody wants the rattle of dead bones; but a vertebrate anatomy is indispensable. And will the *Stage* kindly explain why there

should be no type of drama in which character is subservient to action? Would it abolish the drama of intrigue?

After all is said, this matter of technique is quite subordinate to the question of the general forward movement of the modern theatre. On this larger issue it is absurd to dub me a reactionary. The *Stage* is quite mistaken in supposing that I object to "ethical expansion." Perhaps I would go farther than the *Stage* in that direction. There are some ethics in *The Greatest of These*—more expanded, I fancy, than the *Stage* will approve. As far as ever the public will permit us, I would "widen the horizon." Just as the theatre is unsuited to the subtle analysis of character, it is admirably adapted to the posing of problems and the dramatic discussion of themes. But we must hasten slowly. In our anxiety to be unconventional, I fear that some of us have mistaken unpleasantness for originality, and audacity of treatment for boldness of idea. We have brought problems into discredit, and a natural re-action has supervened; but the tide ebbs only to flow again; and if, whilst we are idling on the sandhills, we start such a dear little white "rabbit" as *Jedbury, Junior*, let us protect it against the "gun" of Mr. Shaw.

No, gentlemen, I quite agree with you, we are not marching to our doom, for the simple reason that we shall halt before we get there. We shall seek safety in that middle course which is so often the right one, and go steadily forward, a few steps, but not many steps, in advance of the public, which will follow us, if we will only trust it and take it into our confidence, in the exploration of a living, breathing, serious English drama, with a heart, a liver, and a spine.

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## THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE SERIOUS DRAMA.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

I AM not quite sure that I fully understand the whole of my friend Mr. Sydney Grundy's article, "Marching to Our Doom," in last month's *Theatre*. There is some confusion in the marshalling of his arguments, with a considerable amount of self-contradiction in the statement of facts on which they are based; and, indeed, there are not wanting, at times, indications that he is not altogether desirous of being taken quite seriously. But so much at least is clear: Mr. Grundy has—not for the first time—a grievance.

Indeed, the grievance on this occasion appears to have three heads; which, again, would seem to be capable of sub-division,

after the Hydra fashion, into many more. In discussing the question which has thus been raised, however, it will be desirable to keep to the original three, which, as I take it, are these. Firstly, Mr. Grundy objects to the first-night audiences, as at present constituted owing to the absurd and, indeed, insane policy of the managers; secondly, he thinks that, if a play is condemned on its first representation, the general public is content to have no particular opinion of its own, and to take its tone from the first-nighters; and thirdly, that Mr. Pinero, and the rest of the small band of authors to whom managers look for the plays with which to keep open their theatres, are so egregiously ignorant of their own business, and so blind to their own interests, as to mistake the foolish and illogical verdicts of the first-nighters for the real *vox populi*, and to suppose that in writing what is demanded of them—or what Mr. Grundy assumes to be demanded of them—by certain sections of this ignorant band, they are supplying the wants of the great British public itself, on whose knees are the fates of authors, managers, and actors alike.

To begin at the beginning, it may perhaps be admitted that the managerial first-night list is not an ideal institution; but I am prepared to assert in the strongest possible manner, and speaking from personal observation, that no one would more warmly welcome a very drastic reform in this direction than the manager himself. He would be glad enough, after reserving a few seats for that portion of the press whose opinion is really worth having and carries any weight with the public—and this would not involve any considerable deduction from the night's receipts—to open his box-office and sell his tickets to the public on the good old principle of "first come, first served." But what is the good man to do? Nowadays managers have their society friends to consider; the people who are useful to the theatre in many ways—sometimes even not wholly unconnected with finance—must be looked after; private friends of his own (and of the author) must be accommodated; there is always a crowd of paying people who expect to have their usual seats reserved for them; and there is that preposterous army of gentlemen—and, oh heaven! of ladies—connected with the press in some more or less mysterious manner, who struggle and intrigue and almost fight for admission to fashionable theatres on first nights. Of course, the manager ought to know that ninety-nine out of a hundred of these parasites have no right whatever to free admission in the name of the press, that the papers they are supposed to represent have no power or influence whatever with the great paying public, and can do the theatre no particle of either good or harm. Perhaps he does know it, but submits, for private



reasons of his own, to this sort of shabby blackmailing. At all events, these people get in somehow—warmly welcomed, as a rule, by the acting-manager, who likes nothing better than to see himself in print as the “genial Mr. So-and-so,” even if the heavens may fall afterwards. The pit and gallery are open to the Playgoers’ Club, and those enthusiastic members of the public who like their playgoing with the maximum of discomfort. That, I think, pretty fairly describes the constituent elements of what some writers love to describe as a “thoroughly representative” first-night house. But I fail to see how such an audience has the power of exercising any such remarkable influence on the general public as to produce the effects of which Mr. Grundy complains. The few first-night “cranks and egotists,” the “men with theories and the women with bees in their bonnets,” of whom Mr. Grundy is so scornful, represent, he is compelled to admit, “nobody under the sun but themselves,” while some of their “ideals and sympathies are not shared by another person alive.” What harm, then, can they do? Of the hundred newspapers into which the garrulity of the stalls overflows, and so effectually swamps the opinion of the cheaper parts, as Mr. Grundy says, how many have any circulation, position, or influence with the playgoing public? The opinions of a few—a very few—critics are received with a certain sort of respect, but, as a rule, the public finds out for itself with surprising quickness and accuracy what the value of any particular entertainment is, and acts accordingly. And the same opinion is all I can arrive at after the consideration of secondly—which is that the general public has no opinion of its own, but is content to be taken in by the “insane” judgment of the first-nighters. Believe me, Mr. Grundy, you are mistaken. You will get at the public, under certain circumstances, whether the cranks and idiots of the first night approve of you or not. A foolish first-night audience may put serious obstacles in the way of a really good play, it is true. That it can make a failure of it, and so destroy it, is disproved by all the teachings of experience.

This brings us to the third point, in the course of his argument on which Mr. Grundy practically says that the business of the dramatic authors is being destroyed before their eyes, and that they are marching to their doom, because Mr. Pinero has mistaken the “crankiest of the stove-pipe fanatics”—what is a “stove-pipe fanatic,” by the way?—for the public, and, writing with the peculiar fancies and fads of Mr. Bernard Shaw or Mr. Archer in his mind’s eye, has brought the “serious drama” to its present pitiable plight.

All this I steadfastly disbelieve. Mr. Pinero has, I think, in

most of his recent work unquestionably formed an erroneous judgment of the present taste and wants of the public; but I acquit him entirely of the absurdity of attaching any serious importance to any utterances of any cliques of "stove-pipe fanatics" and the like. Mr. Pinero wants no stove-pipe or other criticism to teach him his business, and if he has failed for a while to hold the public attention, as I believe he has, he has only done what many a good man has done before him, and will be none the worse for it by-and-bye.

After all, in a long experience of the stage, I have heard all this talk about the moribund state of the serious drama so many times before, and I have also witnessed so many remarkable revivals and resurrections, that I confess I cannot go on taking any but the most languid interest in the discussion. The present trouble, to my mind, has been caused entirely by the success of *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, and by the desire of managers and authors (who are given to following one another like sheep) to achieve something equally great in the same way; oblivious of the fact that the public must inevitably tire very speedily of the "sexual problem," with its divorce court surroundings and embellishments, its morbid analyses of the characters of hysterical enthusiasts and erotic temptresses, and its chronicles of the sordid intrigues of brazen little French trollops and conventionally hypocritical country town tradesmen. But that, perhaps, is another story.

There is plenty of room for the serious drama; but it must be clean as well as clever, wholesome work as well as good; and when Mr. Pinero, or Mr. Jones, or Mr. Grundy, or indeed any writer, old or new, gives us a good, sound, strong story, told by characters in whom decent people can take some sort of interest, and feel some sort of sympathy, he need entertain no apprehension of any of Mr. Grundy's first-night bogeys, and that doleful march to doom will be stopped as if by magic. The public will support any really good work in this direction, I am quite certain. Who will give it the chance?

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## MR. GRUNDY AS CASSANDRA.

BY H. HAMILTON FYFE.

MR. GRUNDY is a very clever and accomplished playwright. He is also an able controversialist. But when clever people lose their tempers (from whatever cause), they lose

also, like less distinguished folk, their ability to state a case with moderation, and to see clearly into what shallows and morasses their heated periods may lead them. The purpose of Mr. Grundy's article in *The Theatre*, which, however much or little assent its conclusions may command, has attracted much attention, was to pour out the vials of his wrath upon one or two dramatic critics whose tastes do not coincide with his own. Observe, however, where his vehemence has landed him. Nothing satisfies but the sweeping assertion that the drama is "marching to its doom," And in what manner does he support this remarkable contention? By what force of logic does he contrive to establish to his own satisfaction so startling a theorem? Let us see.

Disentangling from the angry denunciation which forms the greater part of Mr. Grundy's article the actual propositions he set out to establish, we find them to be these: (1) That the first-nighters (mostly composed of "enthusiastic eccentrics" whose "verdicts are worthless and misleading") have so great a following that "if they decide that a play is not worth seeing" few people go and see it; (2) that these same first-nighters have no following at all.

How Mr. Grundy manages to reconcile the two apparently irreconcilable statements I cannot pretend to understand. The only hint he gives us as to the mental process he has gone through in arriving at such strangely divergent conclusions within the space of four pages lies in his remark that the public have not yet found out the antagonism between the tastes and requirements of the "first-nighters" and their own. Now, this passes belief. Mr. Grundy must have an extremely low opinion of the average intelligence of playgoers if he can persuade himself that they habitually accept, unquestioned, the verdicts of critics with whom they find themselves in habitual disagreement. Readers of newspaper criticisms must, if they ever go to the theatre, decide, in course of time, how far they can accept the advice of various writers as a guide to pieces that are worth seeing. If anyone, having read Mr. Archer's notice of *Michael and His Lost Angel*, went to the Lyceum, only to be very much disappointed, and still accepts Mr. Archer's judgment as final, we cannot think of him as a very intelligent person. If on several distinct and separate occasions he disliked the plays recommended by "W. A.," and even then continued to regard him as infallible, we should begin to look for a resemblance in the shape of his head to that of the Amsterdam idiot, so obligingly exhibited for our instruction by the phrenologist of Ludgate-circus. Mr. Grundy, however, has in his mind's eye a whole population of



Amsterdam idiots, and herein may possibly be found the explanation of certain points in certain of his plays which have occasionally caused some of us an emotion of mild wonderment.

This is one of the fallacies underlying Mr. Grundy's diatribe—that critics are accepted at their own valuation, and that, when the public does not agree with them, it says to itself, “These good gentlemen are so wise and know so much better than anyone else what is a good play, that next time they are sure to be right,” and cheerfully abides by their decision. Another fallacy equally astonishing is this—that the whole critical faculty brought to bear upon the drama is represented by Mr. William Archer and Mr. Bernard Shaw. No one can doubt, after reading Mr. Grundy's article, that it is these two critics in particular against whom the forces of his rhetoric and invective are marshalled. And how soon Mr. Grundy's fabric crumbles away when one considers for a moment the constitution of the body of gentlemen invited on first nights to pass judgment on new plays. “This clique” (“W. A.” and “G. B. S.,” so we read) “has gained almost complete ascendancy over our first-night audiences.” Is this so indeed? “Then,” says the inexperienced reader of Mr. Grundy, “I suppose that *Trilby*, *The Prisoner of Zenda*, and *The Sign of the Cross*, to take three typical examples of the kind of play which these ‘enthusiastic eccentrics’ do not care for, have succeeded in spite of the verdict of the first-night audiences.” But what are the facts? The scene after the first performance of Mr. Wilson Barrett's piece was one of wild enthusiasm; *Trilby* was received with the warmest marks of favour; *The Prisoner of Zenda* was hailed at once as the success for which Mr. Alexander had been waiting so long. Where was the “almost complete ascendancy” on these occasions? Or take two pieces which did gain the approval of the “clique”—*The Divided Way* and Mr. Jones's latest effort. “W. A.” and “G. B. S.” liked them, and said so plainly enough. But no one who read the notices of these plays in the morning and evening papers on the days after they appeared could help seeing that even those who did not condemn them outright damned with faint praise, and gave the practised reader of critiques the decided impression that they had not appealed with any degree of force to the first-night audiences. To anyone who knows even by repute the majority of the dramatic critics whose opinions obtain a circulation worth considering, this “almost complete ascendancy” theory is positively grotesque. The etiquette of the profession forbids the mention of names when their owners have not chosen to emerge from the dusk of anonymity. But if

anyone will take the trouble to study the criticisms published in the London daily newspapers, which, after all, must exercise the largest amount of influence—an influence certainly greater than that of the “weeklies” which are read by a comparatively small number of people—he will speedily arrive at the conclusion that “the pet affectation of actors” is not confined to them alone, and that one dramatic author, at all events, either does not, or successfully affects not to read the dramatic columns of the press.

The published opinions of the general body of critics do very fairly represent public opinion; and their estimate of the favour with which a play is likely to meet is not often falsified by the event. That the criticisms in the *World* and the *Saturday Review* do not give expression to the opinions of very many people is quite evident from a glance at the announcements made “under the clock” in the newspapers. Mr. Archer is always interesting, and Mr. Bernard Shaw is generally amusing. But it is difficult to imagine the author of the “mechanical rabbit” apologue being taken seriously; while “W. A.,” when he cries up a play like *Michael*, or makes pathetic endeavours to persuade the genial public into sharing his enthusiasm for Dr. Ibsen’s works, is but a voice crying in the wilderness—an indefatigable piper piping unto such as altogether decline to dance.

How much the playgoing public are influenced by criticism at all is a question that would survive much discussion. Criticism of plays in unaccustomed quarters has a good deal of effect, without doubt. The encomia passed upon *The Sign of the Cross* by religious periodicals has probably sent to the Lyric Theatre thousands of people who paid no heed at all to accounts of the piece published in secular papers. If a “daily” were to devote a leading article to a new play, either praising it or declaring that it ought not to be tolerated, that play would for a time enjoy a remarkably prosperous run. But the number of people who read carefully the ordinary dramatic notices in the newspapers is, I imagine, comparatively small, and even of this chosen band not nearly all would select their entertainment in accordance with what they have read. Those who wield most power are those whose judgments are emphatic, whose faculty of vision is limited to black and white. Take notice of a street quarrel. The antagonist who waves aside all subtleties of reasoning, and plainly names his opponent a qualified fool at once gains over to his side the *mobile vulgus* who surround the pair, especially if he can follow up this crushing rejoinder with a stroke of that peculiar humour resident in abusive personal allusion. The apostle of “urbanity,” willing and anxious to argue the matter

out fairly, is invited to explain "wot's the good of all his jor," and retires from the scene amid a fire of lurid sarcasms. Human nature has its roots deep, and the "mob" of newspaper readers is swayed by passions and humours similar to those which agitate the "mob" at street corners. On the whole, it is best, perhaps, that criticism should not exercise the astounding influence which the thoughtless sometimes claim for it—that the critic should not feel the weight of responsibility too heavy upon his shoulders. What misery would be the lot of the conscientious reviewer were he to persuade himself that his judgments carried any weight?

As I have to my own satisfaction proceeded to demolish Mr. Grundy's propositions, torn off his "Q. E. D." labels, and affixed in their stead the conclusion "which is absurd," the actual proposals he makes can be dealt with in summary fashion. As to "reorganising our ridiculous first nights," it may be doubted whether Mr. Grundy will find any manager to agree with him about the "preposterousness" of the present arrangement. It is a well-known fact that first-night audiences are, as a rule, if anything, rather too friendly, and many a play that is hailed with applause by a "packed" house would be hooted off by an audience composed of people who had all paid for their seats. The actor can more successfully cope with the nervousness incidental to a first performance when he knows that he has friends in front, and from him also, as well as from the manager anxious to get "notices" as soon as possible after productions, Mr. Grundy's proposal would be likely to meet with active opposition if ever it were to emerge from the theoretical into the practical stage.

As to the quite uncalled-for suggestion that Mr. Pinero should recognise "thoughtlessness and vulgarity" as "the factors of the problem" which playwrights have to solve, such a sentiment is hardly worth answering. If Mr. Grundy thinks *The Benefit of the Doubt* was a "mere study of character," one can but disable his judgment. Let him continue to construct "well-made" plays with telling dialogue and forcible situations, and, if they are as interesting as much of his past work has been, they will rejoice the box-office-keeper and be enjoyable as well. But do not, Mr. Grundy, because you see that the world moves, cry out to those who move with it that they are not being appreciated, and had much better mark time or even go back upon their tracks. *Nulla vestigia netrorsum* must be the motto for those who rate artistic endeavour even higher than a run of years. In spite of the momentary turn of public favour in the direction of "musical farce" and spectacular sensationalism, we



can whisper “*E pur si muove*,” and, heedless of Cassandra’s bitter cry about the “doom” awaiting us, look forward hopefully to better times.

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## A FRENCH VIEW OF SHAKSPERE.

BY ERNEST BRAIN.

**I**T is a very trite, but none the less a very true, observation that if there be one thing more than another of which Englishmen are proud it is the genius of Shakspeare. We may be excused, therefore, for feeling a little disappointment when we find, as we constantly do, that our French neighbours, whose opinion is indispensably entitled to much weight in literary and dramatic matters, have hitherto failed to appreciate all the greatness of the master. To Voltaire, who knew English intimately, Shakspeare was an inspired barbarian; to many of the leading men of letters of contemporary France he is a barbarian without the inspiration. Even that prince of dramatic critics, M. Sarcey, does not hesitate to be ironical at the expense of British enthusiasm for the greatest man that the British race has produced. After enumerating certain faultless plays, he concludes, “Let us throw in *Macbeth—to please the English!*” “I doubt,” says M. Maurice Bouchor, in commenting on this witty but malicious rally, “I doubt whether this advance will obtain for us the immediate evacuation of Egypt.”

Now, M. Bouchor is an ardent lover of Shakspeare, to his honour be it said; and in a recent article in the *Revue de Paris* he has given utterance to very pregnant criticisms on the acting of the Shakspearean drama, from which we learn some at least of the reasons why the French are so indifferent to the grandeur, beauty, and charm of our poet’s plays. He says:—“The attempts so frequently made to acclimatise Shakspeare in Paris are the more touching because a section of the critics always receives them in a bad humour; and what is discouraging is that the poet is principally blamed, in spite of the concessions which respect exacts. These concessions, I dare to say it, do not disarm me. Before any discussion, it would be necessary, in my humble opinion, to recognise that Shakspeare is one of the three or four greatest poets who do honour to the human race; a creator of types to whom Molière alone is comparable; a genius almost as powerful with laughter as with tears; a mind the intuition of whose thought divined the soul of our age; a heart so large, so profound, so human, that beside him Corneille or Racine, in spite of their noble genius, are somewhat dry and narrow.”

While fully realising and admitting the merits and talents of French actors—and who could fail to do so?—M. Bouchor unhesitatingly condemns the interpretation which Shakspeare receives at their hands. He tells us that often when a play of Shakspeare's has been acted in France he has left the theatre saddened by the poorness of the performance. If this, he adds, be the effect upon one who has loved and studied the poet, it is not to be expected that those to whom Shakspeare is unknown, who ask for a revelation of his genius, should feel but little enthusiasm for what they have seen and heard.

M. Bouchor assigns four principal reasons for his dissatisfaction with the acting of Shakspeare in Paris. First, the translations or adaptations are too often unfaithful to the letter of the text, and sometimes miss its wit in the cruellest fashion. Next, the staging of the piece is awkward, having no relation to the poetry of the subject, and the insufficiency of machinery necessitates interminable waits between the acts. Further, the French actors have no traditions to go upon, and are extremely ill at ease in Shakspearean dialogue. Finally, the public itself remains cold in the presence of a work both old and foreign; a work, moreover, which is sometimes charged with a dose of poetry or thought a little too strong for the average playgoer.

Of course, the first difficulty with which a French manager has to contend is the difficulty of language; and this difficulty is so serious that, in M. Bouchor's opinion, a Frenchman wholly ignorant of English, but having a good acquaintance with a prose translation of a play of Shakspeare's, would lose less of the meaning of the play if he were to see it performed in English than if he were to see it played by French actors. "We have," he says, "a mania for translating in verse a thing almost impossible." But, as he justly observes, even prose translations are not beyond the reach of criticism. "Prose has no wings; and how shall it follow the poet in his soaring flights?" As the best solution of this difficult problem which he can suggest, he proposes a prose version; but he would translate in verse, in varied metres, first everything intended to be sung, then everything that the author presents as a poem, and, finally, in most cases, the scenes written by Shakspeare in rhymed verses, because their character is essentially poetic. In the passages which he would translate in verse he would take more pains to be faithful to the spirit of the text than to the letter.

As for the mounting of Shakspeare's plays in Paris, M. Bouchor tells us that the Comédie Française tolerates Shakspeare, but does not love him; while M. Porel, of the Odéon, does not create around Shakspeare's characters the atmosphere which gives them

the appearance of reality. "Go to the Lyceum in London; all that has been done here (in Paris) will appear poor and mean. . . . You will see marvels of richness, taste, and poetry." It must be admitted that M. Bouchor grows enthusiastic over the stage management of the Lyceum; but when he compares it with that of his own country, so far as Shakspeare is concerned, it does not appear that his enthusiasm is misplaced. His description of the Weird Sisters in *Macbeth*, as represented in Paris, makes it clear that the public could hardly be expected to preserve gravity in their presence. "At the Lyceum," he tells us, "I saw amid the darkness, which was cloven by sudden flashes of light, three shadows move, of which I could hardly distinguish the hideous profile. The prophetic words fell from their lips in strongly-marked rhythm; and they faded away like phantoms. The feast at which bleeding Banquo comes to take his seat equalled in tragic horror what I imagine a performance of Æschylus must have been; I still see the spectre with his fixed eyeballs, Macbeth gasping, exhausting himself in words in order to subdue his terror, and the guests motionless, attired like kings and queens, listening to the master in an icy silence." The admirable grouping of crowds on the Lyceum stage, and the extremely natural effects obtained where large numbers of persons have to be introduced, elicit a full share of our author's praise.

Coming to the question of the actors in France and in England, M. Bouchor says that he admits the inferiority of his own countrymen only in so far as the acting of Shakspeare is concerned. That which defeats the French actor, he says, is that which is peculiar to Shakspeare: the unexpected turns of his fancy, the mixture of clownishness and profundity, the humour which exerts itself for its own amusement, a dreamy grace allied to childish prattle, the bursts of subtle lyricism, and the indefinable feeling that life is a dream. In the performance of *Hamlet* at the Théâtre Français, nothing pleased him but the acting of M. Mounet-Sully as the Prince. M. Got, that admirable actor of Molière, had not a single point of resemblance to the Polonius of Shakspeare; Mlle. Reichenberg, inimitable though she is, completely missed the character of Ophelia. Even Madame Sarah Bernhardt, in the same part, could not satisfy him. "Ah! if you had seen Ellen Terry, in her very simple white dress, with her fine limpid eyes, and her hair released! If you had heard her softly lamenting, and murmuring the old complaints which her memory lets slip as soon as it has seized them! Then, seeing and hearing Ophelia herself, you would have felt all that there is of poetry in that virginal phantom, and your heart would have been constrained by an irresistible emotion."



Every Englishman must feel gratitude to M. Bouchor for his noble protest against mutilations of the text of Shakspeare. "It is difficult for me to understand," he says, "how a man of wit—I mean M. Henry Fouquier—a man expert in all things, can counsel seriously the manipulation of Shakspeare according to the æsthetic principles of M. Sardou. This *apropos* of *Hamlet*. He even observes that a Sardou would not be indispensable. "You and I, he says in substance, would manage the business very well." And again, "My conclusion is that you must take Shakspeare as he is or discard him altogether. Cuts are possible, provided that they are done with intelligence, and there are few people to whom I would trust myself for that; but don't imagine that a petty cleverness will ever be able to repair the deficiencies of a genius."

The last part of M. Bouchor's article is devoted to a criticism of *King Lear* as given at the Lyceum. The critic is by no means a blind eulogist of Sir Henry Irving, but speaks of him as a great artist. Of *Lear* he writes:—"I was overwhelmed with emotion in certain scenes, the pathos of which is unequalled. I no longer knew that there were actors in the world, English or French, when *Lear*, at the sound of very soft music, awoke from a heavy sleep and saw Cordelia. She was standing beside his bed, the living image of filial piety, and with a voice so tender, veiled in tears,

‘Sir, do you know me?’

‘You are a spirit, I know; when did you die?’ . . . .

‘O, look upon me, sir,

And hold your hand in benediction o’er me:

No, sir, you must not kneel.’

‘Pray do not mock me:

I am a very foolish, fond old man,

Fourscore and upward . . . .

. . . Do not laugh at me,

For, as I am a man, I think this lady

To be my child Cordelia. . . .’

During this dialogue, I was glad that the house had been plunged in darkness, and I remembered the words of Ugolino, ‘If you do not weep on hearing me, at what are you wont to weep?’”

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## HENRY IV. AND FALSTAFF ON THE STAGE.

BY FREDERICK HAWKINS.

**I**N the course of the present season we may have more than one chance of renewing our acquaintance with a piece almost entirely unknown to the majority of us to-day through the

medium of the stage. I refer to the First Part of *Henry IV.*, perhaps the most vivid and important of Shakspeare's historical plays. Mr. Tree proposes to revive it for a course of morning performances, and Mr. Augustin Daly, as though to afford us another proof that the race of impudent mutilators of the poet is not yet extinct, has, if we may believe an announcement from the other side of the Atlantic, jumbled together the two parts, in order to exhibit Miss Rehan to us as Prince Hal. In each case the result will be awaited with no ordinary interest. Possibly we may be taught by Mr. Daly that he knows the art of a dramatist better than Shakspeare did, and by Miss Rehan that a brilliant comedy actress may become a fitting representative of one of the manliest of English sovereigns. On the other hand, we may have to agree with a writer in the *Sketch* that ladies on the stage should not play male parts except in burlesque. Curiously enough, the First Part of *Henry IV.*, notwithstanding its dramatic force, the bright light it throws upon conspicuous historical figures, and, above all, the presence in it of our old friend Falstaff at his best, has not been seen in London for more than thirty years. Its latest revival, I think, was at Drury Lane in 1864, Creswick being the Hotspur, Walter Lacy the Prince of Wales, and Phelps the Sir John. And yet this long break in the history of the play is not altogether surprising. Falstaff is scarcely a character to be essayed with a light heart, even by comedians of the first rank.

Let me say a few words here as to the fortunes of the First Part of *Henry IV.* on the stage. It came out towards the end of the sixteenth century, before the author had completed his thirty-fifth year. According to tradition, the first actor who gave expression to the "conceited mirth of Sir John Falstaff," as the title page of the first edition had it, was John Lowin. Could the play have failed to obtain a wide popularity? Not only does it dramatise to the best purpose a stirring page of English history, but the character of the corpulent old braggart, coward, sensualist, robber, and sack-drinker, with his rich humour, his quickness of mind, his ready wit, his satirical pleasantries, his knowledge of men and things, his matter-of-fact philosophy, his overflowing *bonhomie*, has become one of the cardinal possessions of the world. In no literature have we so fascinating or distinctive a creation of the kind. By the way, as I ventured some years ago to contend, an exaggerated view of Falstaff's cowardice is usually taken. If not a hero, he shows more self-possession than many heroes could boast of. Observe, for example, the tone of his speeches on Shrewsbury-plain. No one in abject terror can be humorously fanciful at the same time.

His apparent fright is merely an indolence which hates to be called upon for active exertion. Like the Court jester, Moron, in Molière's *Princesse d'Elide*, he thinks it better to live a day in the world than a thousand years in history. Nor—to point out another misconception—does he descend to the level of a vulgar buffoon. Between the lines of his speeches we can see that he is a born and bred knight. He is treated by the high-souled and chivalrous Henry as a friend; his chosen associates are men of a high stamp; the Bardolphs and Pistols are only his servants. It has been conjectured, apparently with good reason, that he originally figured as “Sir John Oldcastle,” and that Shakspeare, respecting the susceptibilities of an important part of the audience, gave him something like the name of another worthy knight before the piece appeared in print. Be this as it may, Protestants and Roman Catholics may well have been at one in admiring a creation which only a Molière could have equalled.

Falstaff seems to have made his reappearance on the stage shortly after the Restoration. “In Paul’s Churchyard,” Mr. Pepys jots towards the close of 1660, “I bought the play of *Henry IV.*, and so went to the new theatre and saw it acted; but, my expectations being too great, it did not please me as otherwise I believe it would; and my having a book I believe did spoil it a little.” Seven years later comes another such entry. “To the king’s playhouse and there saw *Henry IV.*, and, contrary to expectations, was pleased in nothing more than in Cartwright’s speaking of Falstaff’s speech, ‘What is honour?’” This actor, it will be remembered, was one of the original members of Killigrew’s company at Drury Lane, the house under notice. Pepys saw the play a third time, and, not liking it then, abruptly returned to his couch. Hart, the erstwhile lover of Nell Gwyn, probably represented Hotspur in all these revivals. Cartwright was succeeded as Falstaff by a greater comedian, Lacy, described by Evelyn as Roscius. Betterton added Hotspur to his repertory in middle life, yet again setting all competition at defiance. He must have found an excellent King in the majestic and quietly-expressive Kynaston, who, in delivering the line, “Send me your prisoners, or you’ll hear of it,” conveyed, says Cibber, “a more terrible menace than the loudest intemperance of voice could swell to.”

Betterton was to have the distinction of being the first of the two great Falstaffs of the English stage. He undertook the part at the theatre in Lincoln’s-inn-fields in 1700, at the age of about sixty-five, with Verbruggan as Hotspur, Scudamore as the Prince, and Berry as the King. In connection with this performance a



curious story is related by Chetwood. A master-pavior in Dublin, by name Baker, was stage-struck—so much so, in fact, that on one occasion, having unconsciously interrupted his work to give off a dramatic speech, his men, in the full belief that he was mad, bound him hand and foot, and, followed by an irreverent mob, carried him home “in that condition.” Returning to England from Ireland, a comedian “gave Mr. Betterton the manner of Baker’s playing Falstaff, which the great actor not only approved of, but imitated, and allowed the manner was better than his own.” Be this as it may, Betterton’s impersonation appears to have borne the stamp of his own peculiar genius, though crabbed old Aston, prone to disparage him now and then, picked holes in it. As far as we can tell, the general verdict was summed up in the words of a contemporary writer quoted by Malône. “The wits of all qualities,” he says, “have lately entertained themselves with a revived humour of Sir John Falstaff in *Henry IV.*, which has drawn all the town more than any new play that has been produced of late, which shows that Shakspeare’s wit will always last; and the critics allow that Betterton has hit the humour of Falstaff better than any that have aimed at it before.” The illustrious player had no great reverence for or real appreciation of Shakspeare, as his acceptance of such hideous mutilations as Davenant’s *Macbeth* and Tate’s *Lear* will show; but in this case, at least, he had the good sense to confine himself to a few defensible omissions.

Even more successful than Betterton as Falstaff was the usually rigid and formal Quin, who first essayed it in 1721. Indeed, on weighing the testimony of his contemporaries in general, we can hardly doubt that he so far unbuckled himself, so far let himself go, as to become the most adequate representative the part has yet had. His rolling eye, his rich voice, his unctuous humour, his turn for satire and raillery, all enabled him to give full effect to a just conception. Nothing, we are told, could have been more delightful in its way than his acting on the detection of his lying. Perhaps the ablest of his many rivals as Falstaff were Harper and Hulett, the former of whom played it at Drury Lane to the Hotspur of Barton Booth, the Prince of Wilks, and the Glendower of Colley Cibber. Booth, it may be mentioned in passing, is supposed to have appeared as Falstaff “for one night only” to gratify Queen Anne. According to one critic, Harper, “though wanting the marking eye and some judicious strokes of Quin, yet had what Quin wanted—that jollity and natural pleasantry which Shakspeare has given to the character.” But this was not the view of the best judges, especially when Quin acted Falstaff to the Hotspur of Garrick at Covent Garden in 1746. “I can

only," writes Foote, "recommend the man who wants to see a character perfectly played to see Mr. Quin in the part of Falstaff; and if he does not express a desire of spending an evening with that merry mortal, why, I would not spend one with *him* if he would pay my reckoning." With a bottle of claret and a full house, we learn from another source, Quin became the knight himself. "Pray," asked Horace Walpole, "who is to give an idea of Falstaff now Quin is dead?"

From that time to the present the question has never been conclusively answered, admirable as one or two performances must be deemed. Of Shuter's Falstaff we are told that "what he wanted in judgment he supplied by archness; he enjoyed the effects of his roguery with a chuckle of his own compounding, and rolled his full eye, when detected, with a most laughable effect." His successor, if less salacious in suggestion, earned for himself a tribute in the *Rosciad*—

Old Falstaff, played by Love, shall please once more,  
And humour set the audience in a roar.

But the nearest approach to Quin was made by Henderson at Drury Lane in 1777. His Falstaff was to some extent a triumph of art over nature, fine humour and trained skill supplying the place of physical requisites with very happy results, especially in the soliloquies. Of one desirable innovation in the "business" of the piece he was an accidental cause. Hitherto every Falstaff had resorted to broad farce when he took Hotspur's body on his back. Henderson found the task so difficult that soldiers were ordered on to relieve him of the intended burden; and thereafter this became a more or less settled custom of the stage. King, Fawcett, George Frederick Cooke, and Stephen Kemble successively attempted to equal or surpass him, but without success. "After acting all the Falstaffs," the third confessed, "I have never been able to come up to my ideas of them." If contemporary criticism may be trusted, Stephen Kemble's only qualification for the part was that he could play it without padding. Nevertheless, he had the honour of appearing in it at Drury Lane to the Hotspur of Edmund Kean, a singularly fine impersonation. In Charles Kemble's Falstaff, given at Covent Garden in 1824, the essence of the character was almost entirely lost, as he turned the genial roysterer, certainly not too careful of appearances, into a polished and courtly gentleman with a turn for pleasantry. Doran remarks that when Warde, as the Prince, said, "Peace, chewet, peace," the command seemed very well timed. In 1826, at Drury Lane, Elliston tried Falstaff to Macready's Hotspur, but was prevented by illness from getting through satisfactorily. Bartley, another Falstaff, made no such

mistake as Charles Kemble ; on the contrary, he was disposed to exaggerate rather than tone down the grosser element. Lastly comes Phelps, whose humour was of too dry a quality to do full justice to what he uttered, but who, as I am just old enough to remember, played in a way possible only to a consummate artist.

The Second Part of *Henry IV.*, as may be supposed, has not so long a stage history as the First. Early in the eighteenth century it was revived by Betterton in a sadly mutilated form, the last act being an abridgment of the first act of *Henry V.* In years to come Cibber distinguished himself as Shallow, Theophilus Cibber as Pistol, and Quin as Falstaff. Garrick revived the play at Drury Lane in 1758, and, though not physically suited to the part, created some effect as the King. His delivery of the line—

How I came by the crown, O Heaven forgive !—

is spoken of as singularly fine. If Miss Rehan persists in coming forward as Prince Hal she may boast of a precedent, since in 1773, at Covent Garden, Mrs. Lessingham, “by desire,” disported herself in the character. At the same theatre, in 1804, Kemble was the King, Charles Kemble the Prince, and Cooke the Falstaff. In 1821 it was again revived here, mainly as a pageant commemorative of the coronation of George IV. Macready played the King, and a portrait of him in his royal robes is to be seen at the Garrick Club. Phelps twice gave the play at Sadler’s Wells, himself doubling the parts of the King and Shallow. Since then it has not been seen in London, though revivals of it at Manchester in 1874 and 1878 aroused more than passing interest.

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## CHARITY MATINÉES.

BY MALCOLM WATSON.

WE are all agreed, of course, that charity is an excellent thing—a virtue to be strenuously encouraged and sedulously cultivated. Admirable as are the conditions which govern this world of ours, experience proves only too clearly that flaws in its machinery are constantly betraying themselves, and that, however carefully they may be safeguarded against, a breakdown sooner or later is inevitable. The prudent man, to whom opportunity in the shape of a kindly providence has been generous, takes his measures accordingly ; but even in this best of all possible worlds there are some upon whose shoulders occasion has laid a burden heavier than they can bear. For those there can be nothing but sympathy ; and every effort to alleviate their distress is worthy of instant recognition.



No project, however, was ever yet set on foot in which use and abuse did not battle for supremacy. Unfortunately, the latter not infrequently contrives to win an easy victory. In the end, a movement, legitimate enough in itself, is discredited and rendered ridiculous. This, apparently, is rapidly becoming the case in the instance of the charity *matinée*, which, established with a thoroughly deserving view, bids fair to degenerate into a vehicle for the glorification and advertisement of a few interested faddists. Nothing, let me hasten to say, could be more praiseworthy than that a number of artists should rally round an old comrade who by years of acknowledged endeavour and devotion to his art has acquired an incontestable claim alike upon their support and that of the public. In such cases giver and receiver are equally blessed—an act of merited recognition is performed, and no harm done. But the charity *matinée* that I have more immediately in view does not belong to this category. At its head there is ordinarily to be found a group of crotchety specialists or some benevolent gentleman with more leisure on his hands than he can usefully employ and possessed of an unquenchable thirst for notoriety. What may be the particular object on behalf of which the appeal is made is, after all, of no great consequence. Nor does it appear to occur to such philanthropical busybodies in what light their action may be regarded by the public. To those, however, who desire to see the members of the theatrical profession retain their self-respect and the honourable position to which they have attained, the whole thing can only be a subject for regret. Here as elsewhere, although in a somewhat altered sense, the old proverb that charity should begin at home obtains with peculiar force. Again and again it has been contended that so long as the public receives a fair return, for its money in the shape of entertainment, all necessary conditions are satisfied. That, however, is a totally erroneous impression. There is such a thing as loss of dignity, of self-respect, and of prestige also to be considered. A profession which is unable or unwilling to put its hands into its pockets in order to support its own charities must surely have reached a parlous state of impecuniosity or be endowed with a singularly low estimate of its own liberality.

It will be urged, of course, that the great cause of charity is as truly helped by giving one's services on those occasions as by drawing a cheque. Apart from the considerations I have mentioned, it has to be said, however, that the great cause of charity, as the public is gradually learning to realise, has in only too many instances absolutely "nothing to do with the case," and that the

most potent factor underlying all this outburst of philanthropy is self-advertisement. Were it needful, I could quote cases, easily substantiated, of artists refusing to appear, after having pledged themselves to do so, because sufficient prominence had not been given to their names, or because precedence in the programme had been allotted to other performers of, as they insisted, no greater or even less reputation than themselves. To those ladies and gentlemen it never seems to occur that audiences are utterly indifferent to such petty trifles, and that even were they disposed to lay stress upon them, the greater the sacrifice on their part the greater the charity. From an entirely opposite standpoint, it may be questioned whether managers are likely to advance their own interests by appearing, and allowing their companies to appear, in separate acts of plays that form at the moment the chief attraction of the evening bill at their own theatres; and whether, in the long run, it would not be more to their advantage to forward that little cheque, of which so much is heard and so little seen. That, however, is a point the solution of which must be left to themselves. It is the larger question which appeals directly and immediately to the theatrical profession as a corporate body. Where acquiescence is so simple and easy, it seems, perhaps, not merely cruel, but almost impossible, to refuse co-operation, especially when the presence of an artist at such performances only entails, at the worst, the loss of an afternoon's leisure—a sacrifice, obviously, of no great moment. But the problem cannot be so lightly dismissed, inasmuch as it involves issues of much greater importance, in which the reputation and the credit of the members of the profession are distinctly to be considered, as against the advancement of a small knot of officious interlopers anxious by any possible means to secure for themselves a measure of cheaply-purchased notoriety and the popularity springing from a so-called act of charity.

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"THE THEATRE," APRIL, 1896.



*Photographed by Alfred Ellis, 20, Upper Baker Street, N.W.*

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MISS ROSINA FILIPPI.





## Portraits.

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### MISS ROSINA FILIPPI.

THERE is one point upon which all who have seen *Trilby* are agreed, whatever else they may think of the play and its performance, and this point is that the Madame Vinard of Miss Rosina Filippi is an exceptionally good and artistic piece of acting. Such a unanimous verdict surprises no one who has watched Miss Filippi's career since, ten or eleven years ago, she made her first appearance with Mr. Benson's company. Fresh then from two years of study with Mr. Hermann Vezin, so well did she profit by them and by her early experiences that, until she retired temporarily from the stage, five years ago, she had no difficulty in finding pleasant and profitable engagements. It was while she was playing in *The Red Lamp* that the late Lord Lytton, no bad judge, specially singled out her performance, and declared with emphasis that no cleverer *soubrette* could be found on either the English or the French stage. Miss Filippi's Italian parentage—her mother was the only woman who has ever been a professor at the Milan Conservatoire—gave her a natural turn for acting, which was developed by careful training from her earliest years. She was educated with a view to becoming a singer, but her voice proved insufficiently strong, and the loss to Italian opera was a gain to English comedy. During her four years at the Court Theatre, Miss Filippi was associated with several of the most successful of the many pieces produced there by Mrs. John Wood, of whose "kind and generous management" she speaks in feeling terms. She left the Court to play one of two leading parts in the "favourite drama" matrimony, and for a time the stage knew her not. But a course of superintending amateur performances at Oxford turned her energies once more into a theatrical channel, and sent her back to her profession to conquer again the position she had relinquished, and to make a name also as a trainer of young artists. She has already begun to hold classes in rehearsal form at a London theatre, receiving none who do not seem to her to possess decided talent, and working on a system that has every promise of favourable results. "If pupils will only work long enough," she says, "they will be good artists while still young girls, and will not have to mount the hill with the same difficulty most of us had." To a large extent a labour of love, Miss Filippi's efforts ought to bear good fruit. It is in such a direction that the solution of the "beginners on the stage" problem may most hopefully be looked for.

## At the Play.

### IN LONDON.

THE month of March, as usually happens, has this year proved productive of few novelties, but ample compensation is likely to be afforded by its successor. During the next few weeks changes may be expected at quite a dozen of our west-end houses, the managers of which are naturally anxious to make the most of the approaching season. Meanwhile a distinct falling-off in attendance at most of the theatres has to be recorded, a circumstance, however, by no means surprising in Lent.

### FOR THE CROWN.

A Romantic Play, in Four Acts, done into English by JOHN DAVIDSON from FRANÇOIS COPPÉE'S *Pour la Couronne*. Produced at the Lyceum Theatre, February 27.

Stephen .. ..	Mr. IAN ROBERTSON.	A Turkish Prisoner..	Mr. J. CULVER.
Prince Michael Bran-		A Sentinel .. ..	Mr. J. WILLES.
comir .. ..	Mr. CHARLES DALTON.	A Goatherd.. ..	Mr. MURRAY HATHORN.
Constantine Bran-		A Page .. ..	Miss DORA BARTON.
comir .. ..	Mr. FORBES ROBERTSON.	Bazilide .. ..	Miss WINIFRED EMERY.
Ibrahim .. ..	Mr. MACKINTOSH.	Anna .. ..	Miss SARAH BROOKE.
Lazare .. ..	Mr. FRANK GILLMORE.	Militza .. ..	Mrs. PATRICK CAMPBELL.
Ourosch .. ..	Mr. J. FISHER WHITE.		

In his endeavour to adapt M. François Coppée's romantic drama, *Pour la Couronne*, to the English stage, Mr. Davidson has accomplished a difficult task with great skill and discretion. To the poetic qualities, to the power and novelty of the original piece, ample tribute was paid on its production in January last year at the Paris Odéon; yet, despite the inherent strength of an absorbing story, it was felt that both in point of treatment and of sentiment its narration might fail to exercise upon an English audience the same influence which it had proved to possess over a French one. Fortunately all fears founded upon such a supposition have proved illusory. In many respects *For the Crown* is a much better and more satisfactory play than *Pour la Couronne*. Mr. Davidson's dramatic instinct has taught him to avoid what was least effective in M. Coppée's work, and to prune it of much of its unnecessary verbiage and tautological superabundance. The result is a drama short, concise, and to the point, wherein the action progresses swiftly and directly towards its final climax. It must not be thought, however, that in seeking to circumscribe the march of events Mr. Davidson has neglected the finer issues of the tragedy. On the contrary, his dialogue, admirably terse and nervous when required, is found on occasion to rise to a very considerable height of poetic excellence. In no instance can he be spoken of as a mere translator, a simple transcriber of another's thoughts. Where necessary, he has, it is true, followed



closely in M. Coppée's footsteps; but at the same time he has claimed and allowed himself a latitude the exercise of which is fully justified by the result.

The action of *For the Crown* passes in and about the Balkans towards the close of the fifteenth century. Prince Michael Brancomir, to whose watchfulness the safety of Bulgaria is chiefly due, covets the crown, which, however, is awarded by the popular voice to his competitor, Stephen, the saintly bishop. The ambition of Michael's young wife, Basilide, to reign as queen is thus thwarted, and in revenge she enters into a plot with Ibrahim, a Turkish emissary, to secure the throne for her husband. With this view she eventually persuades Michael to take the place of the sentinel whose duty it is to guard the Trajan pass, and who at the first hint of danger has orders to kindle the warning beacon which shall bring a horde of armed men down upon Mohammed's followers. Passionate love for his wife renders Michael an easy tool in her hands, and at her entreaty he agrees to betray his country in order to obtain the crown for himself. His son Constantine has, however, been apprised of his intention by Militza, a gipsy girl captured in a recent raid; and, hurrying to the *rendezvous*, he meets his father beneath the shadow of the Trajan Arch. Unable to turn Michael from his infamous purpose either by threat or entreaty, Constantine draws his sword, and after a short but determined combat lays him dead at his feet. Then, in a transport of patriotic rapture, he seizes a torch and sets fire to the beacon, thereby announcing to all the presence of the hated Turk. The entire scene is one of extraordinary power and picturesque beauty. But things thereafter are not destined to go well with Constantine, who, constrained by a sense of filial duty, preserves inviolate the secret of his father's shame. Finally he himself, a victim of Basilide's treachery, is accused and pronounced guilty of the very crime committed by his father, to whose statue, erected in a public square at Widdin, he is condemned to be chained until death shall set him free. Fortunately a kinder fate awaits him. Forcing her way through the crowd, Militza, whose love has been the one bright ray in Constantine's gloomy career, stabs her lover with the poignard he had previously given her, and then, plunging the weapon into her own heart, falls dead at his feet. A finer *dénouement* to a most interesting and stimulating drama it would be difficult to conceive. Among the performers the chief honours fall to Mr. Charles Dalton and Mr. Forbes Robertson, who, as father and son, acted with a force, dignity, and eloquence worthy of the greatest praise. Mr. Dalton, indeed, surprised even those who have been most ready to

recognise the vigour and virility of his style on former occasions. As Militza, Mrs. Patrick Campbell was seen at her best in the love passages, which she played with a tenderness and a charm fascinating in the highest degree. Only in the last trying scene did she fail to gain the effect aimed at. While giving Miss Winifred Emery every credit for understanding and grasping the intellectual significance of a character like that of Bazilide, we are constrained to confess that in point of execution her performance left much to be desired. From first to last it only served to impress the spectator with a feeling of effort, of good intentions unfulfilled. Mr. Mackintosh furnished a clever but rather too obvious portrait of the spy, Ibrahim, and Mr. Frank Gillmore a capital sketch of a rugged soldier, while Miss Sarah Brooke, small as her part was, played it so sympathetically and so intelligently as to render her future a subject of decided interest. *For the Crown*, it need hardly be said, is superbly mounted, every detail apparently having been carefully studied and jealously attended to by the present enterprising managers of the Lyceum—Mr. Forbes Robertson and Mr. Frederick Harrison.

### THE GRAND DUKE; OR, THE STATUTORY DUEL.

A Comic Opera, in Two Acts, by W. S. GILBERT and ARTHUR SULLIVAN. Produced at the Savoy Theatre, Saturday, March 7.

Rudolph . . . . Mr. WALTER PASSMORE.  
Ernest Dummkopf . . Mr. C. KENNINGHAM.  
Ludwig . . . . Mr. RUTLAND BARRINGTON.  
Dr. Tannhauser . . Mr. SCOTT RUSSELL.  
The Prince of Monte Carlo . . . . Mr. SCOTT FISCHER.  
Vicount Mentone . . Mr. CARLTON.  
Ben Hashbaz . . . Mr. WORKMAN.  
Herald . . . . Mr. HEWSON.

The Princess of Monte Carlo . . Miss EMMIE OWEN.  
The Baroness Von Krakenfeldt . . Miss ROSINA BRANDRAM.  
Julia Jellicoe . . . Mdme. ILKA PALMAY.  
Lisa . . . . Miss FLORENCE PERRY.  
Olga . . . . Miss BAKER.  
Gretchen . . . . Miss VINCENT.  
Bertha . . . . Miss ANNIE ROSE.  
Martha . . . . Miss BEATRICE PERRY.

That the new Savoy opera is a great success there can be no possible doubt. It may have faults; it may be inferior to more than one of its predecessors; but the fact remains that *The Grand Duke* is from first to last a delightful entertainment. It makes one glad that there are such men in the world as W. S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan—glad, above all, that they are once more pulling together in “double harness,” instead of flying off in opposite directions and devoting their energies to separate work. Let us candidly admit that the complex variations upon the theme of the “Statutory Duel” are a trifle too intricate in their elaboration. What of it? Is there any reasonable being, hungry for laughter, who can complain of lack of fun or dwindling mirth after the members of the dramatic company of Herr Ernest Dummkopf have taken their places at the Grand Ducal court of Pfennig-Halbpennig? The very worst objection to be urged is that the Grand Duke himself, in the person of that diverting actor, Mr. Walter Passmore, must necessarily be banished

from the scene by his "technical decease" until such time as the usurpers of his throne shall have become involved in hopeless trouble. It is a case of choosing between Mr. Passmore and Mr. Rutland Barrington, and excellent as is the former in the Grossmith line of characters which he has so worthily made his own, it may fairly be questioned whether he could bear the weight of the second act of *The Grand Duke* with the ease displayed by his more experienced colleague. Mr. Barrington, indeed, bears the chief burden of the piece, and the part of the self-reliant comedian, Ludwig, must henceforth be reckoned among his happiest creations. Some of the most telling numbers fall to his lot, and whether describing the secret sign of the "sausage roll" or criticising the customs of ancient Greece (in the gilt armour of Agamemnon, with a Louis Quatorze wig for head-gear), he is invariably and inimitably funny. It has been observed that Mr. Gilbert has introduced a number of whimsical ideas of which too little is made, and which ultimately come to nothing. That may be; but at least it ought to be considered that they arouse hilarity for the time being, and so serve a legitimate purpose. Besides, the instinct of the author is not altogether wrong. The seven Chamberlains of different grades, with their low bows and their formal observance of cheap etiquette, bring down the house on their solitary appearance; a second essay on similar lines might fall flat. Much safer is the substitution of another droll notion—that of the "super" noblemen who comprise the retinue of the Prince of Monte Carlo at eighteenpence apiece per day. So, again, there is no particular development of the idea which makes the Grand Duke and his intended spouse, the Baroness von Krakenfeldt, a couple of parsimonious money-grubbers. Still, it gives rise to one of the best scenes in the opera, where the elderly pair do their courting publicly in the market-place, in order to keep up the enhanced value of houses whose "drains date from the time of Charlemagne." Both Mr. Passmore and Miss Rosina Brandram are splendid in their duet and dance here. Not the least ingenious of Mr. Gilbert's devices is that for justifying the foreign accent of Madame Ilka von Palmay by making her an English *comédienne* in a German theatrical troupe. The talent and charm of this artist have won for her an unequivocal success, and her scene of mock-tragedy in the style of a recitation, with musical accompaniment, is one of the hits of the performance. Altogether the opera is extremely well cast, and it is mounted and played in accordance with the best Savoy traditions. Sir Arthur Sullivan's music is none the less fascinating because here and there the gifted composer has repeated himself. Those, indeed, are the moments that are most welcome to average audiences, who love



to recognise the rhythms and “figures” that recall their favourite gems of the past. But there is much also in this clever score that is fresh and indicative of unexhausted resources; and it may be that the noble chorus which opens the second act will “live” as long as anything that Sir Arthur Sullivan has ever put into comic opera.

### SHAMUS O'BRIEN.

Romantic Comic Opera, in Three Tableaux, by GEORGE H. JESSOP and C. VILLIERS STANFORD.  
Produced at the Opera Comique Theatre, Monday, March 2.

Shamus O'Brien ..	Mr. DENIS O'SULLIVAN.	Sergeant Cox ..	Mr. FRANK FISHER.
Capt. Trevor ..	Mr. WILLIAM STEPHENS.	Lynch the Piper ..	Mr. GAROGHAN.
Mike Murphy ..	Mr. JOSEPH O'MARA.	Nora O'Brien ..	Miss KIRKBY LUNN.
Father O'Flynn ..	Mr. C. MAGRATH.	Kitty O'Toole ..	Miss MAGGIE DAVIES.

The fates which for several years have worked against good fortune at the Opera Comique Theatre have at last succumbed, and to what?—an Irish comic opera, written by an Irish composer, and performed to a large extent by Irish artists. No one would have dared to predict such a thing. But it is always the unexpected that happens, and the success of *Shamus O'Brien*—looked forward to as a probability in the country and as a certainty in America, where it will be played by a company expressly sent out—has proved healthy and vigorous at the precise place where weakness was most feared. After all, though, it is a mistake to accuse the London public of a tendency to reject good works because they are not produced at fashionable theatres. The contrary has been demonstrated over and over again, and both Sir Augustus Harris and Professor Villiers Stanford correctly gauged the strength of their hand when, *faute de mieux*, they decided to stake the fortunes of *Shamus O'Brien* at the Opéra Comique. The earnest sentiment and pure human interest of the story, allied to music now joyous and gay, now grave and pathetic, and nearly always intensely Irish, conquered every prejudice that the scene might have engendered, and elicited a verdict full of spontaneous enthusiasm. The libretto evolved by Mr. George Jessop from Le Fanu's well-known poem has been deservedly praised. Such faults as were pointed out have since been, as far as possible, corrected, and the action now moves with greater briskness than it did on the first night. The absence of real plot cannot be altogether atoned for; but, nevertheless, the events connected with the arrest, trial, and final escape of Shamus furnish a series of picturesque incidents, some of which—notably the drum-head court-martial and the procession to the gallows—are treated in highly-effective fashion. It has remained for the musician to impart to these a measure of attractive power and artistic value that raises the whole production to the level of genuine *opéra-comique*. Dr. Stanford

has hit upon a happy medium between dry scholastic devices and purely arbitrary forms on the one hand, and the excessive freedom of the Wagnerian method on the other. He has condescended to be absolutely tuneful. His ballads are marked by simplicity and grace, his dances by rhythmical spirit and "go," and all alike are imbued with Irish character to a degree that makes it difficult to realise that they are only imitations and not the real thing itself. The concerted numbers and choruses are no less remarkable for their appropriateness, while both here and in the orchestration the hand of the skilled workman reveals itself at every point. In short, the music of *Shamus O'Brien* can be appreciated and enjoyed by the least cultivated listener. To these merits must be added that of a singularly adequate performance. With the sole exception of Father O'Flynn, who needs a more genial and broadly-humorous actor than Mr. Magrath, the characters are all in suitable hands. Mr. Denis O'Sullivan, a capital singer as well as a forcible actor, gives full prominence to the part of Shamus; and Mr. Joseph O'Mara, a tenor whose histrionic abilities have not hitherto shone in a very favourable light, furnishes as Mike Murphy a study of cowardly meanness so abject in its pitiful and insinuating character that one hardly knows whether to sympathise with the traitor or to hate him. The two sisters, Nora and Kitty, offer an admirable contrast, and to this abundant effect is given by Miss Kirkby Lunn and Miss Maggie Davies—the former the possessor of a beautiful and well-trained mezzo-soprano voice, and the latter an actress of unusual archness and vivacity. The chorus and orchestra, ably conducted by Mr. Henry J. Wood, are quite beyond reproach, and the mounting of the opera is worthy of such past-masters of their art as Sir Augustus Harris and Mr. Richard Temple.

### THE ROMANCE OF THE SHOPWALKER.

An Original Comedy, in Three Acts, by ROBERT BUCHANAN and CHARLES MARLOWE. Produced at the Vaudeville Theatre, February 26.

Thomas Tomkins ..	Mr. WEEDON GROSSMITH	Conningsby ..	..	Mr. T. HESSLEWOOD.
The Earl of Doverdale ..	Mr. SYDNEY WARDEN.	A Shopman ..	..	Mr. SKINNER.
Captain Dudley ..	Mr. SYDNEY BROUGH.	Lady Munro ..	..	Miss M. TALBOT.
Mr. Samuel Hubbard ..	Mr. FREDERICK VOLPE.	Lady Evelyn ..	..	Miss MAY PALFREY.
Alexander MacCollop ..	Mr. DAVID JAMES.	Lady Mabel ..	..	Miss NINA BOUCAULT.
Mr. Catchem ..	Mr. C. H. PENTON.	Dorothy Hubbard ..	..	Miss ANNIE HILL.
		Mrs. Tomkins ..	..	Miss M. A. VICTOR.

In the opinion of the modern dramatist the expression "original" is apparently fraught with something of the peculiar fragrance popularly supposed to confer blessedness upon the word "Mesopotamia." On no other grounds can its use—or rather abuse—be reasonably accounted for. To quarrel with Mr. Robert Buchanan and Mr. Charles Marlowe merely because they have followed a fashionable custom would, therefore, be

absurd. Yet it may be permissible to remind them that in days remote a well-known novelist, named Samuel Warren, wrote and published a romance called *£10,000 A Year*, which even now has a certain vogue among readers of light literature. Mr. Warren's hero was a Mr. Tittlebat Titmouse, and it is surprising, when one comes to compare the doings of both, how close is the resemblance between his adventures and those of Mr. Thomas Tomkins, the protagonist of Messrs. Buchanan and Marlowe's new and original comedy. *Pereant illi qui ante nos nostra dixerunt* is an axiom, however, which never seems to lose its application, and which few authors, since its first utterance, have not been tempted to employ at some period of their career. So to Mr. Buchanan and Mr. Marlowe let us in all charity give the benefit of the doubt, and admit that, if to others more widely acquainted with English literature there is a familiar air about the story of *The Romance of the Shopwalker*, to them it probably appears to be the very epitome of all that is novel and original. So far as our readers are concerned, let each judge for himself. Thomas Tomkins, a counter-jumper in the "Bon Marché" at Dorking, has indiscreetly allowed himself to fall in love with Lady Evelyn, the beautiful and accomplished daughter of the Earl of Doverdale, much, be it said, to the grief of pretty little Dorothy Hubbard, who silently worships the ambitious Thomas. An unexpected windfall, in the shape of a fortune yielding £20,000 a year, places Thomas in a position to realise his fondest dreams, and to become a suitor for the hand of the fair Evelyn, who not unnaturally regards him with contemptuous indifference, while bestowing her affections upon her cousin, handsome young Captain Dudley. But the Earl is impecunious, his estates are heavily mortgaged, and to save papa from impending ruin Lady Evelyn consents to become the wife of aspiring Thomas. This latter, however, proves to be a better fellow than anyone suspected, seeing that, on recognition of his mistake, he with graceful magnanimity releases Lady Evelyn from her promise, places her in the arms of Captain Dudley, and, after presenting the Earl with the title-deeds of his estates free of all liabilities, turns for consolation to his old sweetheart, Dorothy. If, in the treatment of this simple tale, the authors have shown no great wit or humour, they have at any rate supplied a fair measure of rough-and-ready fun, sufficient in itself to keep the average audience thoroughly amused. In Thomas Tomkins, Mr. Weedon Grossmith finds a congenial part, which is none the less effective because, beneath a vulgar manner, can be detected indications of a kind and generous nature. Miss May Palfrey as Lady Evelyn played sympathetically and



gracefully, although a certain indistinctness could occasionally be noted in her delivery. Judged purely from the standpoint of acting, Miss Nina Boucicault's performance of the high-spirited, sweet-natured Lady Mabel was quite the best of the evening. Mr. David James gave an admirable sketch of a canny Scotchman, and Miss M. A. Victor a genuinely amusing portrait of a vulgar but well-meaning old woman. A word of praise is also due to Miss M. Talbot's Lady Munro, and to Mr. Frederick Volpe's Samuel Hubbard.

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### SHADES OF NIGHT.

A Fantasy, in One Act, by R. MARSHALL. Produced at the Lyceum Theatre, March 14.

Captain the Hon. Terence Trivett ( <i>of the 21st Lancers</i> ) ..	Mr. FRANK GILMORE.	Sir Ludovic Trivett ( <i>A Phantom</i> ) ..	Mr. J. WILLES.
Winifred Yester ..	MISS ETHEL WEYBURN.	The Lady Mildred Yester ( <i>A Phantom</i> ) ..	MISS HENRIETTA WATSON.

The ground idea upon which *Shades of Night* is based might well have originated in the whimsical brain of Mr. W. S. Gilbert. Indeed one is almost tempted to regret that this was not the case, considering the excellent use to which he would certainly have put it. It is vain, however, to sigh for the unattainable, and as the little play bears the signature of Mr. R. Marshall we must needs accept it as it is, thanking our stars that the piece is no worse. As a matter of fact, *Shades of Night* is in reality much above the ordinary run of curtain-raisers; and its execution, if a trifle disappointing, promises well for the author's future. Before he can take rank as a humorist, Mr. Marshall, however, will have to purge his wit of a certain sense of cheapness. Unlike the well-known Scotch editor, who joked with "deeficulty," he jests with only too much facility. Here and there, on the other hand, he happens upon an idea so ingeniously conceived and so neatly expressed that there is every reason to believe he may yet, with careful self-restraint, attain to an excellent position as a writer of comedy. The motive underlying the new piece is purely fantastic. During one of the pauses in a fancy dress ball, two young people, Captain Terence Trivett and Miss Winifred Yester, have sought the seclusion of a haunted chamber, there to carry on a long-standing flirtation. Trivett meanwhile is weighed down by the recollection of an ancestral curse, according to which he is predestined to an early death. Escape from his doom can only be secured under conditions which fortunately are presently fulfilled. As midnight approaches, a couple of phantoms, Sir Ludovic Trivett and Lady Mildred Yester, make their appearance, with the explanation that on a certain night in each recurring year they are compelled to rehearse the tragedy that led to their respective deaths a century and a quarter before.

The fun arising from the working out of such a situation on Gilbertian lines may easily be imagined. Eventually all ends happily for those concerned; the curse is removed, and Sir Ludovic and Lady Mildred return to their place among the shades. The trifle was agreeably played by Miss Henrietta Watson, especially good in the tragic scenes, Mr. J. Willes, Miss Ethel Weyburn, and Mr. Frank Gillmore.

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### GOSSIP.

A Play, in Four Acts, by CLYDE FITCH and LEO DIETRICHSTEIN. Produced at the Comedy Theatre, February 22.

Count Marcy .. ..	Mr. LEONARD BOYNE.	Servant .. ..	Mr. MULES BROWN.
Richard Stanford ..	Mr. HERBERT STANDING.	Mrs. Stanford ..	Miss ELEANOR CALHOUN.
Thomas Barry .. ..	Mr. J. W. PIGOTT.	Miriam Stanford ..	Miss ANETTE SKIRVING.
Dr. Robbins .. ..	Mr. E. COSHAN.	Mrs. Cummings ..	Miss CARA DANIELS.
Gaston Berney .. ..	Mr. STUART CHAMPION.	Clara Cummings ..	Miss ESME BERINGER.
Hallows .. ..	Mr. J. BYRON.	Mrs. Barry .. ..	Mrs. LANOTRY.

Twenty years ago, it is probable, *Gossip* would have been announced in the current phrase as an entirely new and original play, without any hint of the source from which the story had been drawn. But during the interval the dramatic conscience, stimulated by a lively dread of critical research, has awakened to a sense of its responsibilities, and under pressure of possible discovery has hastened to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. Thus it happens that Messrs. Fitch and Dietrichstein frankly avow on the programme that in writing their new piece they have made use of several suggestions found in a novel by Jules Claretie. So far so good. It seems a pity, however, that their candour stopped at this point, as otherwise the critic would have been relieved of the somewhat disagreeable duty of reminding them that to M. Sardou and M. Georges Ohnet they also owe a large, although unacknowledged, debt of gratitude. *Gossip* is, in short, an indifferent hotch-potch of several well-known plays, of which, as chief contributors, it may suffice to mention *Les Pattes des Mouches* and *Le Maître des Forges*. Nor, unfortunately, have the authors shown any particular skill in the selection or the rearrangement of their material. Even a commonplace tale has before this been rendered attractive by means of a brilliant setting, and the effect of a trivial plot heightened by virtue of clever dialogue. But without being positively a bad play, *Gossip* possesses few of the qualities that make for success. Its story is so familiar that one is almost prompted to apologise for repeating, even in the briefest form, the well-known details. Richard Stanford, although already beyond the boundary mark of middle age, has taken unto himself a young wife, who, some years before the beginning

of the play, had bestowed her love upon a certain Count Marcy. Unluckily poverty prevented the latter from declaring himself. A turn of fortune's wheel, however, brings him wealth. At Trouville he unexpectedly meets Mrs. Stanford, and, believing her still to be single, makes avowal of his love. Apprised of his mistake, he does not, as one might expect in the case of so chivalrous a gentleman, instantly quit the scene, but, on the contrary, endeavours to tempt Mrs. Stanford from her allegiance to her spouse. A foolish quarrel between husband and wife provokes the latter to accept Marcy's proposal, and to despatch a letter informing him of her determination. In Mrs. Barry, however, she possesses a staunch friend, who, in a well-written scene, entreats her not to commit such an act of folly, and finally, having won the girl over to repentance, undertakes to rescue the compromising letter from the hands of the Count. With this purpose in view, Mrs. Barry arrives at a late hour of the evening at Marcy's rooms, albeit for her appearance there she is somewhat at a loss to offer an adequate explanation. Upon the Count's table lies the incriminating note, which Mrs. Barry is as eager to secure as Marcy is desirous of reading. The same situation, it will be noted, has been treated by M. Sardou in a masterly fashion in *A Scrap of Paper*, and its gratuitous repetition in a much less satisfactory shape seems, accordingly, somewhat in the nature of a superfluous act. In the end, Mrs. Barry, of course, successfully accomplishes her purpose, with the pleasing result that husband and wife decide to make another bid for happiness in each other's company. *Gossip*, as may be judged, has been constructed and written chiefly with the view of affording Mrs. Langtry an opportunity of figuring as a good-natured, shrewd woman of the world, whose conversation is—or ought to be—as sparkling as her diamonds. Continuous practice has enabled Mrs. Langtry to master to a large extent the technique of her art, but her pathos still lacks the true ring of sincerity, and her humour breadth. Still, as things go, her impersonation of Mrs. Barry is fairly effective. Mr. Leonard Boyne, although occasionally a trifle inaudible, showed genuine passion as Count Marcy, while Mr. Herbert Standing seemed anything but at his ease in the character of the matter-of-fact husband, Richard Stanford. Despite severe hoarseness, Miss Eleanor Calhoun created a deep impression by her forcibly-conceived portrait of the tempted wife; and minor characters were well handled by Mr. J. W. Pigott, Mr. E. Cosham, and Mr. Stuart Champion. The introduction of a couple of atrociously vulgar New Jersey women (played by Miss Cara Daniels and Miss Esme Beringer) can hardly be pardoned, even on the supposition



that they were intended by the authors to be regarded simply as caricatures.

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### IN THE PROVINCES.

At the Theatre Royal, Brighton, on March 13th, a new play, in three acts, by Mr. L. N. Parker and Mr. E. J. Goodman, entitled *Love in Idleness*, was produced by Mr. Edward Terry. The principal part is that of an amiable, idle, procrastinating old bachelor, who, by "leaving it till to-morrow—or the day after" (to borrow his own phrase), lands nearly everybody in the play in almost inextricable difficulties by the end of the first act. Recognising his folly, he makes up his mind to turn over a new leaf, but he is more unlucky in what he does in the second act than in what he has left undone in the first. After nearly ruining the happiness of two young couples in whom he is interested, he falls in with the lady who had rejected him in his early life, and for whose sake he had remained a bachelor. The play ends in the usual happy fashion. All who know Mr. Terry's style of acting can see him in such a part. Always anxious to please everybody and never succeeding, Mortimer Pendlebury is made as sympathetic and as humorous as possible. Mr. Terry's acting was at its best, and at that it is second to none. He always excels in a part in which the humour is quite unconscious, and the authors of *Love in Idleness* have given him such a character. Miss Bella Pateman and Miss Hilda Rivers were the best of the very able company that Mr. Terry has gathered round him.

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### IN PARIS.

The event of the month has been the revival of *Thermidor* at the Porte St. Martin, with M. Coquelin in the part of Labussière. It is odd, by the way, to see one of M. Sardou's best productions, after being turned out of the Théâtre Français, vindicated by one who has deserted the illustrious company. It is true that the illustrious company was not much to blame at the time, but still it is not they who had revived it. At the Vaudeville we have another sort of revival in the conversion of the novel *Manette Salomon*, by M. Edmond de Goncourt, into a piece in nine *tableaux*. Manette is a Jewess and a model; one of the artists for whom she sits falls in love with her; she becomes his mistress; he wishes her all to himself, and she complies. Then his life becomes miserable through the rapacity of his mistress; his pictures are sold for high prices, while he is bound under contract to supply a certain number to a picture-dealer; and the

end of it is that there is no immediate prospect of a change. The technical art jargon of the dialogue and the want of a well-developed progression do not redeem the absence of a beginning, middle, or end. M. Galipaux in a subordinate part, as a good-natured, honest-hearted *bohème*, is the best thing in a rather thin piece. At the Renaissance, *La Figurante*, by M. François de Curel, keeps up the plain-spoken style of the piece it succeeds. As in *Amants*, there is little mincing of words. The *figurante* Françoise is a poor relative, a girl whom Henri marries on the understanding that the marriage is only a form required by society, but that he is to continue thereafter, as theretofore, his relations with Hélène, the wife of a man of science. The blind husband has to be a man of science, as everyone knows. Henri (M. Guitry) falls in love with Françoise, who does not turn out at all to be the insignificant creature she was supposed to be, and the man of science has his revenge, for he is not such a silly person as was thought either. So all the expectations of the public were realised, and very agreeably so indeed. That the *figurante* lends herself to the arrangement is necessary, but this circumstance does not add to her charms on the hither side of the footlights. At the Nouveautés, *La Tortue*, by M. Leon Gandillot, is a farcical comedy in which the parties, after a frightful muddle of amorous complications, return to their original destiny.

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#### IN GERMANY.

Herr Paul Lindau's drama, in four acts, entitled *Die Erste* (*The First*), which has just been brought out at Meiningen, deals with a social problem of a very peculiar kind. It is based upon events which actually occurred at Leipzig last year, and the characters depicted are ordinary men and women, whose conduct, at a critical moment of their lives, departed from the humdrum groove of every-day existence, and became for a short time intensely dramatic. The wife of the Regierungsrath (Counsellor of Government), Maineck, has lost her only son, and her bereavement has brought on melancholia. Her condition becomes worse and worse, so that the family doctor, in order, if possible, to save her from hopeless insanity, advises her confinement in an asylum where she will receive the proper treatment for her malady. At the beginning of the play the unhappy woman has been already for four years in an establishment at Bonn, and is, in the opinion of the physicians of that place, incurable. In the Regierungsrath's house lives his mother-in-law, who brings up her granddaughter in so radically bad a way that the son-in-law finally opposes no obstacle to her departure. A sister of the

melancholic wife remains, however, in her brother-in-law's house, and by her brightness of disposition counteracts the influence of the mother-in-law, who, of course, is her own mother. The neighbours, or rather that indefinite entity, "people," naturally view this pure relationship with prejudiced eyes, and the tongue of scandal wags freely. Eventually, through the good offices of a Privy Councillor, named Wendlin, and his wife, and those of his mother-in-law, the eyes of the Regierungsrath are opened. He feels that he cannot spare his sister-in-law from his house. She, on her side, becomes aware of her love when she feels it to be her duty to part from her brother-in-law, and resolves to leave his house. The first act closes with a very strong and effective scene between this couple. In the second act the Regierungsrath is married again. The daughter by the first marriage becomes closely attached to her stepmother, and the audience, in anything but a happy state of mind, thinks of the first wife as of one dead. A love affair springs up between the daughter of the Regierungsrath and the son of Privy Councillor Wendlin, who years before had been sent to America on account of his extravagant habits, and who now returns to Berlin as a good man of business, and the representative of an electrical company. The scene in which the young backwoodsman is anxious to declare his love, but wholly unable to come to the point, and finally resolves to telegraph his avowal, is an episode of the most amusing description, and brings the house down. In the strongest contrast to this is the appearance, immediately afterwards, of the family doctor, with the news of the successful cure of the first wife. He had not been able to credit the news which he had received from Bonn on this subject, and postponed speaking out until there was no longer any doubt about the matter. The effect of the news upon the husband is overwhelming. The second wife is immediately sent off (in order that the news may be concealed from her) to her mother in Franzensbad, who has long wished to see her, and it is resolved that "The First" shall be brought from Bonn by the family doctor. Maineck intends to break the terrible truth to her himself. The third act shows "The First," all unsuspecting, received by her husband, who is in the most dreadful plight, while she herself, after her long absence, hardly knows how to accommodate herself to her altered circumstances, although, of course, up to this point she is in complete ignorance of the intelligence which is in store for her. The scene in which husband and wife meet and converse again is one of the finest pieces of psychological development that has been witnessed on the German stage for many a day. The husband does not get an opportunity of



imparting the truth, and a very touching meeting between mother and daughter concludes the third act, which is the most thrilling point of the play. The revelation is made in the fourth act, not by the husband, but by means of a cleverly-managed letter sent to the first wife by the second, who is in Franzensbad. The play is terribly painful in parts, and the audience is left quite unsatisfied as to the logical fate of the poor first wife; though it is intimated that she will take up her residence with her American-German son-in-law and his bride. Altogether, the piece throws a lurid light on the possibilities of German connubial arrangements.

At the Lessing Theatre, Berlin, *Fräulein Tizian*, a play in five acts, by Benno Jacobson, has been brought out. It is a play which deals with artists and their models, and is designed—if it be designed for anything—to prove that the artist who marries his model is a very unwise man. The character of the mother of one of the models is admirably drawn, but the rest of the play is unsatisfactory.

Mention must be made of a drama entitled *Winterschlaf* (*Hibernation*), produced at the Neues Theater, Berlin. This play is the work of Max Dreyer, who was much talked of last year on the appearance of his play *Drei*. The present work is full of stern realism—realism almost too vivid to be pleasant in parts. It was received with enthusiasm.

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#### IN VIENNA.

*Mister Menelaus*, the latest novelty at the Theater an der Wien, is a comic opera based on one of the older works of Labiche, entitled *Mesdames de Montenfriche*. This play contained a very amusing character in the person of an auctioneer, whose anxiety to learn whether his wife had presented him with a son or a daughter caused him to make frequent interruptions in the bidding at a sale. The piece itself has mainly to do with a picture, concerning the possession of which a fierce contest arises between two purchasers, whom we will call Mr. A. and Mr. B. The picture represents a lady attired in a very low-necked dress, and Mr. A. desires to purchase it because he recognises it as the portrait of a former love. As Mr. B. constantly outbids him, Mr. A. finally confides to him the reason why he wishes to become the owner of the picture. Mr. B. is shocked—it is the portrait of his wife! A very quarrelsome scene follows between the two men, and it only subsides when it appears that the portrait is that of Mr. B.'s first wife. However, that gentleman has conceived such a distrust of the gay deceiver that he takes to flight,

carrying his second wife with him. Mr. A. follows, in order to become reconciled, and to beg for the hand of Mr. B.'s niece. A comic duel takes place, but everything ends happily at last. Messrs. P. Rivalier and A. Krakauer turned the play into the libretto of a comic opera, and the latter of the two authors was about to set it to music when he died. The music has, therefore, been composed by Joseph Bayer. The reception of the piece was most favourable.

At the Raimund Theatre, Herr Costa has had a new piece, called *The Prize for Beauty*, brought out; but it is not likely to be as successful as his *Brother Martin*, which was one of the hits of the season last year. The story of the piece is very soon told. There is a "beauty show," and the hard-working, respectable wife of a humble sugar baker competes for the prize and wins it. Her head is turned by her success and the flattery which she receives in consequence of it, and she becomes extravagant, idle, and generally spoilt. Her poor husband is reduced to the verge of bankruptcy, and he leaves his wife and departs on a journey. During his absence the body of a drowned man is discovered, and is recognised as that of the sugar baker. It is supposed that the poor man has committed suicide owing to his wife's misconduct. He returns from his journey in time to see the preparations for his interment, and is, of course, received with amazement. However, the shock which his wife experienced at what she believed to be the suicide of her husband has had a moral effect of a very desirable kind. She turns over a new leaf, and the couple are reconciled. The author, who is a favourite in Vienna, was very heartily applauded by the audience; but the piece fell rather flat. It is what is called a *volksstück*—a people's piece—and those who especially affect this kind of play are easily mystified if the author is ironical or witty where they expect him to be moral and to improve the occasion. This is one of the chief causes of the comparative failure of *The Prize for Beauty*. At the Deutsches Volkstheater, *Circus-Leute* (*Circus People*), a comedy in three acts, by Franz von Schönthau, has been produced. It is hardly well described as a comedy. At least, it is not the kind of comedy that Herr von Schönthau formerly wrote, but a serious piece. It is really a melodrama of the familiar kind, and is intended to prove that even circus people may have stout hearts. One of the characters is an old clown, who has a daughter, a very pretty girl, who performs upon the trapeze. He has also a second and smaller child, who is almost run over in the street, and is saved by a Countess. This rescue is the means of making the Countess acquainted with the circus folk. The Countess

has a son, who falls in love with the young lady of the trapeze. The girl is good and innocent, and although the Countess's pride induces her to offer resistance to such a *mésalliance* on the part of her son, her good heart eventually triumphs over her aristocratic haughtiness, and the marriage takes place with her consent. The author was called many times before the curtain to receive the congratulations of an enthusiastic house; but it cannot be said that his play is very true to life.

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### IN ITALIAN CITIES.

The first performance of Signor Mascagni's new opera *Zanetto*, under the direction of the composer, attracted a select audience to Pesaro. The new work proves to be a short one, and is different in almost every respect from *Cavalleria Rusticana*. The libretto is adapted from *Le Passant*, and Signori Targioni-Tozzetti and Menasci, the librettists, have retained the two short scenes into which the original is divided. The scene is laid in Florence, in the time of the Renaissance, and the characters are two in number—Silvia, who begins to find life dull and monotonous after a youth of gaiety, and Zanetto, a wandering minstrel who chances to play beneath Silvia's window—and the piece is made up of the love scenes of these two people. Both parts were taken by ladies—Signore Collamarini and Pizzagalli—and they and the composer had to respond at the conclusion of the performance to repeated calls before the curtain. Signor Leoncavallo's *Chatterton*, another opera which had been looked forward to with keen anticipation, was produced at the Teatro Nazionale, Rome. As the name suggests, the plot purports to reveal certain incidents in the life of the unfortunate young English poet. At the opening of the libretto, Chatterton is residing with John Clark, a rich tradesman, who is ignorant of his guest's identity until Lord Clifford pays him a visit. The anger to which his discovery gives rise on the part of the poet is increased when he sees Lord Clifford paying polite attentions to Jenny, his host's wife, and from this fact the nobleman draws the conclusion that the relations between Mrs. Clark and Chatterton are of a doubtful character. In the second act Chatterton is seated in his small, bare room on Christmas morning, vainly trying to work, when Snimer, a money-lender, enters, and compels him to sign a deed by which, towards the liquidation of a debt, he sells his body after death to a medical school. Left alone, Chatterton resolves on suicide, and is on the point of taking a dose of poison, when a



Quaker relative of Clark's enters the room, and dissuades him from the intended crime by means of the argument that it would be scarcely honourable to kill himself, and leave Jenny among the living. In the third act Lord Clifford informs Jenny that he proposes to do what he can to help the young poet, and undertakes to get a satisfactory answer to a letter which Chatterton had previously despatched to the Lord Mayor in the hope of obtaining assistance. An answer duly arrives, but when Chatterton opens it he discovers that it merely contains a copy of a newspaper in which he is unjustly accused of plagiarism. In his indignation and despair he drinks a dose of opium, and Jenny, coming in from a festive gathering in the next room, finds him at the point of death. With the death of both—one from the poisonous draught, and the other from nothing more obvious than sympathy—the work closes. The new opera met with an enthusiastic reception from a distinguished audience. M. Sardou's *Marcella* is seemingly not to the taste of the Milanese, for when produced at the Manzoni Theatre in their city it scarcely aroused any interest.

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#### IN MADRID.

The month has not been very productive of new things on the stages of the Spanish capital. The novelties are, indeed, limited to two small farces, one of which is from the pen of Señor Miguel Echegaray, and the other from that of Señor Felix Limendoux. The first of these works bears the title of *La Bicicleta*, and drew together within the Teatro Real on its first night an audience comprising all the chief cycling enthusiasts of Madrid. The author of *La Pravianna* (which was noticed in the last issue of *The Theatre*) anticipated Señor Echegaray in the introduction of the bicycle upon the Spanish stage; but in *La Bicicleta* what is described as "el sport de moda" constitutes the pivot on which the story turns. The farce was produced on the occasion of a benefit performance on behalf of Señor Pepe Rubio, the leading actor at the Real, and the main object which the author had in view appears to have been to afford him a special opportunity of exhibiting the skill as a cyclist with which he is credited. The story presents the spectacle of two elderly gentlemen, who, unmindful of their marital vows, face the perils attendant upon learning to master a bicycle with the sole aim of ingratiating themselves with a young and attractive lady who has been badly bitten by the cycling craze. When to this interesting little scheme are added the more legitimate love-

scenes between the daughter of one of the old rogues and the son of the other, and the manifest jealousy of the two plain but justly-indignant wives, there is not much wanting to give a complete idea of *La Bicicleta*. Señor Limendoux' work, *Sinvergüenza*, is a good thing of its kind, but contains nothing particularly worthy of note.

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## IN NEW YORK.

In *Marriage*, a three-act comedy by Mr. Brandon Thomas and Mr. Henry Keeling, recently produced at the Empire Theatre, Mr. J. E. Dodson has added another to his long list of recent successes by his performance of Sir Charles Jenks. As the quaint dry old solicitor, he evokes praise that can hardly find adequate expression. One newspaper declares that Mr. Frohman owns in Mr. Dodson the finest impersonator of character parts in America, and that nothing quite so brilliant as this has been done before even by Mr. Dodson himself. Another—equally emphatic—says that the performance “was quite as good as anything that John Hare has ever done.” When *Marriage* was withdrawn, and an adaptation from the French by Mr. Clyde Fitch, entitled *Bohemia*, substituted for it, Mr. Dodson again achieved the most signal success of the evening. As a shabby and not over-clean musician—a person somewhat of the Svengali type, minus, of course, the hypnotism—Mr. Dodson fairly exhausts our vocabulary. One can only say he was perfection. Mr. Forbes Robertson has been much more fortunate in his choice of an adapter of M. Coppée's *Pour la Couronne* than has Mr. Edward Vroom. Mr. Charles Renauld has given a bare translation of the text, without preserving the charm and the dramatic intensity of the original. *For the Crown*, produced at Palmer's Theatre, with Mr. Edward Vroom as Constantine, Miss Rose Coghlan as Bazilide, and Miss Maud Harrison as Militza, has had a run of just over three weeks. It was replaced by *Romeo and Juliet*, with Mr. and Mrs. Taber in the principal parts. Mrs. Taber won hearty and well-deserved praise for her performance, which was of a distinctly higher calibre than that of her husband's Romeo. The reappearance of Signora Duse, coming as it did just after the departure of Madame Bernhardt, was, from her own point of view, well timed. She opened with *Camille*, and society, ever in extremes, has extended to her the welcome that they denied to the French actress. It is the fashion to praise all Signora Duse's impersonations extravagantly; but the judicial playgoer, even with a knowledge of Italian, must feel that the efforts of the actress,

striking and vivid as they are, are hardly deserving of the columns of undiluted panegyric which the press has so unanimously showered upon her. As Magda she certainly rose to greater heights than in her performance of Marguerite Gautier, but it was in the double bill of *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *La Locandiera* that her individuality was best displayed. Signora Duse has beyond question the rare art of making two characters so distinct as to make it difficult to believe that they are the creations of the same actress. Daly's Theatre, as well as Palmer's, is playing *Romeo and Juliet*. Mrs. Brown Potter as Juliet, though occasionally forceful, is never free from the deadly taint of staginess. The mounting of the play, as is usual at Daly's, was carried out with magnificence, yet with perfect taste and judgment; so that while the setting of the play materially assisted the illusion, the acting of Mrs. Potter most effectually destroyed it. Mr. Kyrle Bellew's Romeo was worthy of better support. It is quite one of his most noteworthy impersonations. We have also to record a revival of Beethoven's *Fidelfio*, and the production of an opera upon the subject of *The Scarlet Letter*, both given by the Damrosch Opera Company, at the Academy of Music. In the former Madame Katharina Lohse-Klafsky made her *début* in New York, and on all hands it was agreed that a new artist of no ordinary ability has been found. Emil Fisher found ample scope for the display of his fine voice as Rocco. In *The Scarlet Letter* Mr. Walter Damrosch, the composer, proves himself but a sorry imitator of Wagner. Melody is almost entirely absent, and its place is hardly filled by the technically perfect orchestration, which is almost the only merit the score possesses. The author was ably interpreted by Madame Johanna Gadski as Hester and Mr. Baron Berthald as Dimmesdale. Mr. G. P. Lathrop has been very successful in adapting Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel to the requirements of grand opera.

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#### SIR HENRY IRVING IN AMERICA.

Leaving New Orleans at the beginning of February, Sir Henry Irving continued his tour through the south, and was received in all places with a repetition of the stirring enthusiasm which has greeted him during the whole of his progress in the United States. On the 24th of February he opened an engagement for a month at the Columbia Theatre, Chicago, in *King Arthur*. "The appearance of Sir Henry Irving, Miss Terry, and their co-labourers," says the *Times-Herald* in a leading article, "raises the theatrical season from the plane of the



commonplace to the heights of intellectual recreation and refreshment. To all who value art for art's sake, as well as to all who relish it without knowing why, such performances as these players are giving at the Columbia Theatre must be a matter of profound satisfaction and enjoyment. Henry Irving has done more for the stage than any man of his time. We might go further, and say that, except Shakspeare, he has done more than any man of any time to make the drama vital for the entertainment and the elevation of humanity. It is not alone that he is a great actor, or the founder of a school of acting. He is the founder of a school of dramatic interpretation; and he has so enlisted other fine arts in the service of the dramatic art that the theatre in his hands has become the temple of all the arts, where the devotees of each of them may worship, and where none may say that his own idol is not duly exalted. As Shakspeare re-created the heroes of English history, so Irving has re-created every great character which he has essayed, and endowed with new life and meaning every play which has received his attention. His productions of *Charles I.*, *Louis XI.*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Becket*, *Faust*, and *King Arthur* are more than classical; they are standard. Henceforth every production of those plays and every dramatic treatment of their themes, in any language and on any stage, must be measured and appraised in the light shed upon them by the genius of Henry Irving. Why wait until Irving is dead and gone to say these things? Why not impress upon the public, now, that here in our community we have the opportunity to see the greatest living master of the dramatic art, and to view his work? London has come to our doors with her best contributions to the evolution of the art which takes firmest hold on the human mind. Leave it to the critics to point out the flaws in the acting or in the accessories. Compared with the perfections they are infinitesimal. We are sorry for the man who can witness an Irving production without elevation of soul and the quickening of his intellectual faculties—sorrier still for him who misses these productions altogether."

One of the places visited by Sir Henry Irving before his Chicago engagement was Cincinnati. Not a few leading articles were devoted to him in the press. "Ordinarily," said the *Tribune*, "the coming of a company of players to a city is not an occasion which calls for that expression of newspaper opinion called 'editorial,' but in all candour it must be said that when the occasion is the reappearance of Henry Irving and Ellen Terry, and especially after an absence of twelve years, the usual rule does not apply. The presentation of such plays as *King Arthur*

and *Becket*, under conditions which afford a trustworthy insight into the life of the periods which they pourtray, cannot fail to be of importance, in those regards, to the community wherein they are enacted. In these days, when the stage is largely given over to frivolity in varying degrees, without desire to aid in the advancement of genuine culture, no praise is too great for bestowal upon those players who keep a high mission steadfastly in view and work for its advancement." "Genius," said the *Gazette*, "knighted him long before the Queen put the touch of the sword upon his neck; and knees have bowed and heads have been uncovered to him for a decade past, not as a fortunate creature of circumstance, not as one to whom success has flown with open arms, but as a gifted toiler in a sometimes thankless field; a student who burned not his lamp in vain; a genius who has led the stage to its greatest accomplishments, and shown to others a path, though steep and thorny, direct in its ascent to fame, ending at that substantial resting-place where bitterness of criticism or the injustice of jealousy may not dislodge him who attains it. We have been told of the chill that followed the cry of Garrick's Richard awakening in his ghost-haunted tent. Kean, in this same scene, has frozen the marrow of many an auditor; and we in our own time have been made to know the force of the highest tragic acting by Edwin Booth and others whose genius was close akin to his; but Irving's Mathias makes even the bones grow cold, without so much as a cry, for his greatest strength was shown in those scenes calling for quieter acting. Canvas and costumes, properties and environments can do much to give truth and effect to the scenes of a play, but it is only when a genius such as Irving directs these, creates them for a place and a place for them, that they come not only as direct aids, but as an addendum to the work of both actor and author. To describe this wonderful man's acting is a thing utterly impossible in any ordinary and hastily-written review. It would be necessary to follow it through every detail of utterance, movement, and gesture. Mannerisms might be overlooked, since they are so thoroughly a part of the man, indeed, of every man, that a success that comes in spite of any lack of evenness in figure, gait or voice is all the more a triumph, and in that an evidence of genius." As for Miss Terry, "matchless" is the lightest term applied to her acting.

## Echoes from the Green Room.

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SIR HENRY IRVING's present visit to the United States has proved singularly opportune. He has undoubtedly done much to allay the feeling of irritation lately shown there against Great Britain. Responding to a call at St. Louis after a performance of *King Arthur*, he said, "I thank you for your appreciation of this effort to illustrate our Old World legend"—here he paused—"your Old World legend." Seldom has so warm a demonstration been excited in an American theatre as that which followed this little speech. In the words of one paper, the incident "tightened the bonds of friendship between the two countries."

THE late Sir Henry Ponsonby, the Queen's private secretary, was a model of politeness. On the morrow of a performance at Court he telegraphed an inquiry as to the health of the players, always in a particular formula. Not long ago a foreigner was commanded to exhibit a number of intelligent geese before the Queen's great grandchildren. "Her gracious Majesty," he was told on the following day, "would be delighted to know whether the members of your company are well, and have had an agreeable journey. My good wishes to them all." Sir Henry evidently thought that he had to deal with an important company.

MADAME PATTI is at her Welsh home. According to present intentions, she will not go back to the United States, as the voyage is too fatiguing. Though she is fifty-three years of age, her voice is nearly as fine as it has ever been.

MADAME BERNHARDT is inexhaustible. She has written a five-act comedy, *La Duchesse Catherine*, and thinks of playing it during her present tour in America. It is described as an *étude intense et profonde des mœurs Parisiennes*.

It is announced that Madame Modjeska, owing to ill-health, will not act again this year.

SIGNOR ROSSI lately celebrated at St. Petersburg the fiftieth year of his career as a tragedian by a performance of *Hamlet*, and was nearly overwhelmed with applause. He was presented on the occasion with a sword in gold, and, in accordance with Russian custom, with bread and salt on a silver plate.

MR. FISKE writes in the *New York Spirit of the Times*:—"Duse is not a natural actress, like Mary Anderson, nor an actress of technique, like Bernhardt, nor an actress of nature and technique combined, like Ristori. She is simply a nervous, magnetic woman, who affects other nervous women and some nervous men. She is to the stage what Madame Blavatsky was to religion. She is lauded to the skies for her realism, but she is truly the least realistic of actresses. In *Camille*, for example, she does not look the French *demi-mondaine* nor does she act out the character. She is the Lady of the Camelias, but does not wear camelias. She is dying of consumption, but has no cough and no hectic flush. In the first act, she gives a Parisian supper; the tablecloth is of red and white stripes."

MRS. CRAIGIE (John Oliver Hobbes), who is now living in New York, has a pretty wit. At a theatre the other night she sat near Mrs. C—, "a stately woman of the Juno type," who in a novel expressed a distinct



desire to be kissed to death as the pleasantest exit from this vale of tears. "Surely she must wish herself immortal," murmured the English-woman.

No little regret was excited at the Green Room Club on the night of the 9th of March by a telegram from Sir Henry Irving, announcing that Mr. Howe had just died at Cincinnati, where, owing to a sudden attack of illness, he had had to be left behind by the Lyceum Company. Few actors could boast so long and so varied an experience of the stage as he, and no member of his profession was more sincerely honoured in private life. It is difficult to realise the fact that this noble veteran, with his thick white hair, his bright eyes, his kindly smile, his unfailing memory, will not be seen again. Henry Howe Hutchinson, as *The Times* points out, was the oldest of English actors in practice. He came of a Quaker family at Norwich, and was born as far back as 1812. He soon showed an inclination for the stage, and at the age of twenty-two was to be found playing at the Victoria Theatre. Earnest and spirited, his acting attracted the notice of no less a person than Macready, who gave him a place in the first performances of *The Lady of Lyons*, *Richelieu*, and other remarkable plays. From Covent Garden he passed over to the Haymarket, at that time in the hands of Benjamin Webster. His connection with this theatre extended over forty years without interruption, a circumstance probably unique in theatrical history. No matter who was at the head of affairs, Webster or Buckstone, his services could never be dispensed with. During this period, it will be remembered, he was associated at various times with players of high distinction—his managers, Macready, Helen Faucit, Charles Kean, Charles Mathews, Madame Vestris, Farren, Strickland, Tyrone Power, Mrs. Glover, Mrs. Nesbitt, Mrs. Stirling, Madame Celeste, Miss Cushman, Mrs. Keeley, Alfred Wigan, the Chippendales, Sothorn, Miss Sedgwick, Compton, Mrs. Kendal, and a good many more. Buckstone's management of the Haymarket makes an important part of the history of the stage in the 19th century, and Mr. Howe must be credited with no inconsiderable share of the favour it won on all sides. On the withdrawal of his old chief from the theatre he migrated to the Vaudeville, and thence, in response to a special invitation from Mr. Irving, to the Lyceum. In most of the subsequent revivals there he had a share, one of his most effective impersonations being that of sturdy old farmer Flamborough in *Olivia*. Fourteen years ago a friend met him in the Strand. "I am seventy years of age," he said, "and thought that my course was run. Can you believe it? I have just signed an engagement with Irving at a higher salary than I have ever received in my life. Twenty-five pounds a week: never yet had more than sixteen. Just like him!"

To the *Westminster Gazette* a correspondent writes as to Mr. Howe:—"I was once witness to, I think, one of the most unique demonstrations that ever took place on the stage, in which the veteran was a leading personage. It was in the days of the famous old Haymarket company, and they were playing in Manchester. Its leading members were Buckstone, Chippendale, and Howe. Mr. Kendal and Miss Robertson played with delightful—almost gushing—affection as the lovers. The lessee of the theatre, as the *dénouement* of the play came about, let out that Kendal and Madge Robertson that afternoon had been made man and wife in a Manchester church, and that on the fall of the curtain in reality the lovers in more than the sense of the comedy had been made one. The news

spread through the theatre like wildfire, and when Buckstone, Chippendale, and Howe, generously holding each other up, brought the newly-wedded bashful couple to the front of the stage, cheers went up such as are rarely heard in a theatre."

THOUGH Henry Howe has gone, James Doel still remains, and last month he celebrated in excellent health his ninety-second birthday. For many years past he has been the landlord of the "Prince George Hotel," between Plymouth and Devonport, and here he never tires of relating to his admirers his experiences of the stage when he was associated with Kean, Macready, and Fanny Kemble. He has made up his mind that he is going to live to be a hundred, and we sincerely hope he may not be disappointed.

MADAME ALVA has become acquainted with the composer of *Salvator Rosa* and *Fosco* in a rather unconventional way. Hearing her sing from one of his operas at her own house, he knocked at the door, rushed up to her, declared who he was, apologised for the intrusion, and accompanied her on the piano to much of his own music. On the following day he presented her with his last opera, *Condor*.

SIGNOR MASCAGNI, as we showed last month, has adopted the stupid old device of deriding musical critics as men who have failed as composers. Of James W. Davison, so long connected with *The Times*, the same thing was said, though in a purely jocular way, by the facetious Charles Kenney:—

There was a J. W. D.,  
Who thought a composer to be;  
But his muse wouldn't budge,  
So he set up as judge  
Over better composers than he.

In his early days, we have no doubt, Davison tried his hand at creative work, but that he was one of the keenest and most accomplished of musical critics at any time there can be no question.

MUCH regret has been excited by the death of Miss Florence Terry, the youngest sister of Miss Kate Terry, Miss Ellen Terry, and Miss Marion Terry. Taking to the stage in her youth, she distinguished herself as Louison in *The Robust Invalid* (Charles Reade's version of *Le Malade Imaginaire*), as Little Nell in Halliday's adaptation of *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and as Nerissa in Sir Henry Irving's first revival of *The Merchant of Venice*. Fourteen years or so ago she left the profession (on her marriage with Mr. William Morris), though it was evident that she possessed in no small degree the gifts characteristic of the Terry family.

WHEN the Vaudeville Theatre is taken over in April by Mr. George Edwardes, Mr. Weedon Grossmith will go on tour with his own company. Mr. George Grossmith is still drawing large audiences in the provinces by his single-handed endeavours, in spite of the fact that it is nearly seven years since he began his recitals.

THE "tank drama" is greatly appreciated, no doubt, by a large section of playgoers, but it has certain drawbacks so far as players are concerned. Miss Agnes Hewitt, who, in *The Dark Secret* at the Princess's, had to plunge nightly into the water, is now suffering severely from the effects of her immersions, and has to be temporarily invalided. It appears, by the way, that the lease of the Princess's will not be put up for sale after all. *East Lynne* is doing well, but it will be succeeded before long by a new melodrama manufactured by Mr. G. R. Sims and Mr. Arthur Shirley.

ONE of the most acceptable books of the hour is Mr. Arthur a Beckett's *Green Room Recollections*, some of which have already been made known to the readers of *The Theatre*, and which proved so attractive a feature of the *Sunday Times* during his editorship of that paper. Though still young, he has had a singularly wide experience of men and things, and what he says has the brightness that might be expected of a valued contributor to *Punch*. Among other anecdotes he tells us that an actor in the provinces once boasted of having doubled Sir Henry Irving as Mathias in *The Bells*. Somebody appeared to be sceptical on the point. "I played, sir, the part of that eloquent arm of Irving's that has to put out the candle just before the visionary trial scene comes on," was the lofty reply.

MR. SAINTSBURY, in his recently-issued *History of Nineteenth Century Literature*, devotes no more than seven pages out of some 450 to the subject of the Drama. Living authors are, of course, omitted from his scheme. The productions of Tom Taylor, Robertson, Byron, and Albery are left unmentioned, though surely *Caste* and *The Two Roses* are as well worth passing notice as the work of O'Keefe or Hannah More. Professor Saintsbury says that "the English drama of the nineteenth century has displayed one curious and disastrous characteristic. The plays, as a rule, which have been good literature have either never been acted or have seldom succeeded as plays. The plays that have been acted and have been successful have seldom been good literature." Further, he remarks that "the character and condemnation of the English drama of the first half of this century from a literary point of view are summed up in the single statement that its most prominent and successful dramatist was James Sheridan Knowles."

It is a pity that Mr. Wilson Barrett is not more thoroughgoing in his endeavours to make the "dressing" of the *Sign of the Cross* strictly correct. A Roman emperor and prefect with long hair hardly fit in with archaeological accuracy. Close cropped heads were the only wear in Rome at the date when the action of the piece is supposed to take place. Mr. Wilson Barrett should inspect the gallery of Roman busts at the British Museum, and then invoke the aid of the wig-maker.

THE movement in favour of establishing an Actors' Orphanage having been received with insufficient enthusiasm, it is now proposed to raise funds which shall be applied to securing at the Infant Orphan Asylum, Watford, a certain number of beds—if not a special ward, or even a whole wing—to be devoted to the reception of the children of players who have been able to leave behind them no provision for the future of their offspring. To this end a bazaar will be held at Queen's Hall at the end of June.

THE suggestion we noticed two months ago that an Actors' Volunteer Corps should be formed seems to be bearing fruit. It has been announced that active steps have been taken to carry it into effect, and that Lord Methuen, commanding the London district, has given permission for such a body to be officially enrolled. Mr. Frank Gillmore, of the Lyceum, is Honorary Secretary to the movement, and those who have warmly taken up the proposal include Mr. F. R. Benson, Mr. Percy Brough, and Mr. Farren Soutar, Miss Nellie Farren's son, all of whom are admirably qualified so far as physique goes to take part in the defence of their country. It is added by rumour that Mr. Harry Nicholls will be an officer in the corps. We suppose he must have got tired of being a private in *One of the Best*, and yearns for promotion. But at this rate Mr. William Terriss ought to be made Colonel at once.



MR. GRUNDY is in sackcloth and ashes. In his article in *The Theatre* last month he illustrated the divergence between the points of view of Mr. Archer and of the playgoing public, by a contrast (among others) of "Jaeger's patent wool fabrics" with "the tweeds and cashmeres of the man in the street," the inference being that the Jaeger fabrics are only for persons of eccentric tastes. The Jaeger Company, we are assured, have no "patent" fabrics. "All that they claim is honesty and excellence for their pure undyed woollen underwear. Their tweeds and cashmeres are like those of the man in the street, except that they are tested to be pure wool." Mr. Grundy penitently writes to the firm:—"It was not my intention to allude to your manufactures in any disparaging sense, but merely as a departure from the ordinary. If you are acquainted with the gentlemen with whom I compared them, you must be aware that they possess many most admirable and unusual qualities."

MR. F. R. BENSON, who has for the seventh time been invited to undertake the Shakspeare Celebration performances at Stratford-on-Avon, will this year produce *Richard II.* This will be the twenty-eighth Shakspearean production at the Memorial Theatre in the dramatist's birth-place. We are glad to note that the text will be faithfully adhered to, and that pains are to be taken to mount the piece as carefully and accurately as possible. In spite of Mr. Daly and Mr. Clement Scott, there are still left managers who can effectively produce a play of Shakspeare, and give a thoroughly good and attractive performance without clumsily carpentering the poet's achievements.

MR. STEWART DAWSON, an actor of good promise, died last month, within a few hours of a performance given at the Globe Theatre for his benefit. He was a son of the late Mr. Edward Dawson, M.P. for South Leicestershire. Educated at Eton and Oxford, he at first went to the bar, but soon afterwards took to the stage.

CAPTAIN MARSHALL, the author of *Shades of Night*, now being played as a front piece to *For the Crown*, is a Scotsman, who was "brought up to the law" in Edinburgh. Throwing up his chances of a legal career, he enlisted; and, like many another "gentleman ranker," obtained a commission. He is aide-de-camp to Sir W. Hely-Hutchinson, Governor of Natal, and is spending his long leave in Europe. So far his efforts in play writing have been lucky, for he has had pieces accepted by other managers besides Mr. Forbes Robertson. Mr. Alexander, it will be remembered, intended to put on a curtain-raiser of Captain Marshall's not long ago, but its performance was understood to have been forbidden by the Licensor. Mrs. Kendal and Mr. Grossmith have also purchased dramas from Captain Marshall's pen.

GOSSIP has been withdrawn at the Comedy, and adds another to the too long list of failures at this theatre. A comedy by Miss Clo Graves, with Mr. Cyril Maude, Mr. Charles Hawtrey, and Miss Fanny Brough in the cast, is spoken of as Mr. Comyns Carr's next venture.

MR. STUART OGILVIE, the adapter of *Hypatia*, will illustrate the Reformation period in his play, which is to be produced at the Shaftesbury Theatre, and will have his principal characters interpreted by Miss Kate Rorke, Mr. Lewis Waller, and Mr. Cartwright. For the moment the "modern drama" does certainly seem to have "gone under."

MR. SANT MATTHEWS died on March 15th at Monte Carlo from consumption. Formerly in the Civil Service, he took to the stage on obtaining

his pension, and his performances in *Sweet Lavender* and *Judah* will not soon be forgotten.

THE late M. Alexandre Dumas—a bust of whom, by the way, has just been placed in the Comédie Française—left behind him two unfinished plays, but gave explicit instructions that they should not be produced.

*La Juive de Grenade*, a new five-act play by M. Parodi, the author of *Rome Vaincue*, has been accepted at the Théâtre Français. He has also completed another work, *Le Pape*.

Mlle. DE BONEZA, of the Odéon, has been secured by the Comédie Française.

M. MASSENET can be sarcastic at times. Once at a *soirée* a lady who was not the best of singers told him that she had been requested to sing the grand aria from the *Cid*. "You don't know how frightened I am," she said. "Not half so much as I am," replied the composer.

M. ARSENE HOUSSAYER, one of the most versatile and accomplished men of letters in our time—at once a poet, critic, historian, novelist, journalist, and dramatist—died on February 29th, at the age of eighty-one. Born at Bruyères, he went to Paris at an early age to seek his fortune, and, having chanced to meet Théophile Gautier, was introduced to the best literary society of that city. From 1849 to 1856 he was a successful administrator of the Comédie Française, a position originally obtained for him through the influence of Rachel. He lived more in the eighteenth century than his own, as his too effusive, but otherwise delightful, book, *Le Roi Voltaire*, was enough to prove.

LE CHEMINEAU, by M. Jean Richefin, has been received à *correction* at the Comédie Française.

It is a commonplace remark among certain dramatic critics in England that Molière is no longer to be acted with profit in Paris. Yet, despite rival attractions, a recent matinée of *Les Femmes Savantes* and *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* at the Comédie Française brought 8825 francs.

M. BAUDRY, of the *Événement*, lately announced that a "black" Shakespearean company, consisting of negroes, had arrived in London to play *Hamlet* at Drury Lane Theatre. Curiously enough, Sir Augustus Harris is ignorant of any such arrangement.

M. DUBOIS, the composer of *Xavière*, recently produced at the Paris Opéra Comique, does not belong to the latter-day school. "It is charming," says one critic, "to hear a composer who says what he thinks in a simple way, and who does not seek to move heaven and earth to show us the love-making of a couple of peasants."

1895 was on the whole a better year for theatrical managers in Paris than 1894. Yet there were more who lost than gained upon their previous year's receipts when one comes to look into the figures. Altogether the nineteen better-known playhouses netted amongst them £740,505, nearly £28,000 more than in 1894. Yet the whole of the increase is divided amongst the Opéra, the Théâtre Français, the Variétés, the Gaité, the Porte St. Martin, the Gymnase, and the Nouveautés. All the other managers' balance-sheets show a loss. The receipts at the Vaudeville fell £11,000, while on the other hand those of the Gymnase and the Gaité increased by £16,000 and £15,000 respectively.

The Italian Government are considering a measure providing that all copyrights of operas and plays shall, when they lapse, become the property of the State instead of the public.

It is stated that the first performance of *Die Walküre* at Naples gave

rise to scandalous scenes. The public remained quiet till the second half of the second act, when, growing impatient, it made fun of everything sung on the stage. In the third act the demonstration became a tumult, and the music could scarcely be heard. The audience shouted "Evviva Verdi" and "Abasso Wagner," and left the hall whistling, hissing, and yelling. The manager dared not give a second performance of the opera.

THE celebrated opera singer, Dapja Nichailowna Leonowa, who has just died, was a star of the first magnitude in the Russian musical world. For more than twenty years she had charmed all Russia with her beautiful voice and her remarkable dramatic talent. She was unsurpassable in the parts of Wanja and Rutmir in Glinka's operas *Life for the Tsar* and *Ruslan*. She was at one time in frequent communication with Meyerbeer and Auber, in whose operas she earned triumph after triumph. In 1879 she made a most successful tour through China, Japan, America, and Western Europe. Leonowa left the stage some years ago owing to a severe illness.

THE *New York Sun* recently gave an estimate of the amount spent annually by London and New York playgoers respectively. London is estimated at £1,400,000 yearly, and New York at £500,000. Paris, according to the official returns, spends £800,000. The *New York Mirror*, discussing these figures, is decidedly of opinion that the amount, as far as their own city is concerned, is greatly under-estimated.

YET another addition to the always delightful Biglow papers must be recorded:—

"There was a soprano whose name was Miss Byrd,  
The finest soprano that ever I hyrd,  
She sung so divinely that men, 'pon my wyrd,  
Would melt into tears, their souls were so styrd.  
No critic would venture her voice to malign,  
Her singing it was so remarkably fign,  
But alas! she said 'yes,' when the bass said 'be mign,'  
And straight from the choir Miss Byrd did resign."

MR. LAURENCE IRVING'S *Godefroï and Yolande* was produced at the Columbia Theatre, Chicago, on March 13th, with conspicuous success, Miss Ellen Terry playing the principal character.

MR. W. D. HOWELL'S novel, *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, is being dramatised for Mr. W. H. Crane, the American actor.

MISS GLADYS HOMFREY is fulfilling a successful engagement in America with Mr. Frohman, and will return to England in about three months. She then goes to Mr. George Edwardes for an autumn production.

MR. FRANKLIN FYLES, the dramatic critic of the *New York Sun*, and the author of several successful plays, including *The Girl I Left Behind Me* (written in collaboration with Mr. David Belasco), has recently experienced the hardships inseparable from his dual position. Mr. Charles Frohman produced Mr. Fyles's play, and the latter has ever since been accused of extravagantly praising all Mr. Frohman's productions. On the morning after *The City of Pleasure*, the *Sun* alone among the whole Press announced that the play was a success. Of course a chorus of disapprobation was immediately raised, and the editor of the *Sun* received many copies of Mr. Fyles's criticism, with other criticisms pasted against it. The editor, who would not officially notice any anonymous communication, passed it on to Mr. Fyles without a word. The critic-dramatist thereupon



offered an explanation to the editor, who at first refused it, saying he could not notice anonymous letters. But Mr. Fyles persisted in explaining that on the night in question he had to criticise two pieces. At the end of the first act of *The City of Pleasure* he left, no indication being at that time apparent that the play was going to be anything but a success. He took his chance, and described the play as a success. At the end of the explanation the editor asked Mr. Fyles, "How much did Mr. Frohman make out of your play?" "Roughly, I should say a hundred thousand dollars." "Then he's under obligations to you—you are not to him," said the editor. "That's clear enough—these anonymous people don't know what they're talking about."

MR. PAUL MARTINETTI has now been on the stage for thirty years, and during that time has never spoken one word before an audience.

THE American papers have had very flattering notices of Mlle. Olitzka, a young mezzo-soprano, who achieved success under the management of Sir Augustus Harris in last year's season of grand opera. She returns to him in May.

MAX O'RELL (M. Paul Blouët) has written a play called *John Bull on the Continent* (a title strongly reminiscent of his earliest efforts in book-making), and has produced it in Canada, where it is being taken round by Mr. Sam Edwards, a comedian who is a great favourite with Dominion audiences. To judge from the notices in the Press, it would seem to have achieved a remarkable success. "One of the best comedies any age or litterateur (*sic*) has produced" . . . "its plot one of the cleverest ever written" . . . "sparkles from beginning to end" . . . "the exquisite Queen's English in which it is written" . . . "for refined comedy and laughable climaxes has few equals" . . . "the most refined and clever comedy we have ever seen"—these are some typical extracts from various provincial and metropolitan newspapers. The Canadian critic, it seems, does not stint praise when he is pleased, though such indiscriminating judgments cannot carry much weight with level-headed readers. Until Max O'Rell's piece is seen on this side, we shall hesitate to believe that it is any more than what the *Montreal Gazette* calls it, "a bright comedy, brightly produced."

SHAKSPEARE seems to have been all but banished from the New York stage of late, but is never absent from it long. Within the past month there have been two productions of *Romeo and Juliet*. At the Broadway, a revival of *Julius Cæsar*, in which Mr. G. C. Miln, a quondam clergyman, gave a creditable performance of Mark Antony, is to be followed by other Shakspearean performances. In addition to these, Mr. Bellew and Mrs. Potter will shortly be seen in *As You Like It*; a revival of *Henry IV.*, Part I., is promised at Palmer's (Mr. W. F. Owen as Falstaff); and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with the Mendelssohn music, is announced for production at the Grand Opera House.

*Freund's Musical Weekly* now appears under the title of the *Musical Age*, and has been considerably enlarged.

MR. DOMINICK MURRAY has finally retired from the stage, and is now living near Montreal.

THE problem play has not pleased the Colonies, the latest example, *John a Dreams*, although beautifully staged, having failed to attract at the Sydney Lyceum. Australian audiences seem to prefer comic opera and romantic drama.



"THE THEATRE," MAY, 1896.



*Photographed by Alfred Ellis, 20, Upper Baker St., N.W.*

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MISS LILY HANBURY.



# THE THEATRE.

MAY, 1896.

## Our Watch Tower.

### AN ACTOR ON AUDIENCES.



N excellent actor, Mr. Herbert Waring, has been informing the members of the Playgoers' Club that when, some thirteen years ago, he first appeared before a London audience, that audience seemed, to his "disturbed imagination," to represent "the epitome of all that is intellectual and hypercritical in the greatest city of the world." He would not now fall into that blunder. Nay, so greatly has his opinion changed, that—putting aside the regular first-nighters, "who are naturally far keener and more analytical than the average playgoer"—he doubts whether an ordinary audience ought to be described as "intellectual" at all. It is a fallacy, Mr. Waring thinks, that the theatre-going public has been "educated up" to a higher level of appreciation than of yore. "The intellectual calibre of our audiences has never been improved one whit by Ibsen or Pinero, or the whole phalanx of dramatists who have thought it incumbent on them to try to follow the lead of these great playwrights." It is a habit with some to talk of "booms" and "reactions" in connection with the stage of to-day. Mr. Waring believes in no such things. If *The Sign of the Cross* is a big pecuniary success, it is (he holds) because it is a well-made play, and proportionately liked, not because its theme is especially attractive, or because the Christian martyr is the fad of the moment. "The popular taste," says Mr. Waring, "never sways, and never has swayed, from its old love of the healthy and the beautiful. In the long run it must have

'Fair passions and bountiful pities,  
And loves without stain.'

We gather that, in Mr. Waring's view, *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* was so popular, not because the public was enamoured of the woman with a past, but because the play was a fine one, and

interested and impressed. "Moreover, the woman with a past," says Mr. Waring, "will again be accepted by playgoers whenever *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* finds a worthy successor." On this point we are inclined to agree with this representative actor. The great body of playgoers remains very much what it was. The number of educated and reflective theatre-lovers may have increased somewhat of late years; but, in the main, the stage is supported by those who are best pleased when the drama proceeds upon old-fashioned lines.

As a whole, however, Mr. Waring's conception of the average audience is perhaps too pessimistic. He describes it as "an unthinking and eminently gregarious animal, wanting in analysis." It "takes no heed," he assures us, "as to who is the author of the play that it is witnessing," or, at least, not more than five per cent. of it knows the author's name. Seventy-five per cent. are indifferent on the subject; fifteen per cent. believe the piece is by Mr. Pinero, and the remaining five per cent. fancy it is by Mr. Henry Arthur Jones. That is Mr. Waring's belief, and, though it may be based upon fact, it strikes us as over-cynical as it stands. Your stalls and boxes may be led to the theatre by the fashion which remembers the name of the play, but forgets, or never knows, that of its author; but we doubt whether this is the case with pit, the dress circle, the upper boxes, and the gallery. Mr. Waring allows that at least the average audience knows and appreciates the cast of the play which it has come out to see. It knows the names of the actors, and has been drawn by them. "It recognises its hero and heroine the moment he or she comes upon the stage, and rewards them with a round of applause." Concerning this, Mr. Waring expressed at the Playgoers' Club an opinion which one would hardly have expected to receive from the mouth of a professional player. "It seems to me," he observed, "that this affectionate attitude of an audience towards actors who interest them must militate very greatly against the proper intellectual enjoyment of a play." Nay, continued this outspoken artist, "I will say frankly that admiration for the actor and neglect of the author is a curse and a hindrance to the progress of the drama, while executive talent is given a wholly excessive value." Mr. Waring is careful to repudiate the notion that he regards the actor's craft as "mean or unworthy;" but he holds that "it is, or ought to be, entirely subservient to, and dominated by, the creative force of the author, and should occupy the second and not the first place in the mind of the audience." The fact is, of course, that when once the curtain has risen the actor must needs assert his sway. He captures in its entirety the imagination of the spectator, nor

do we see how this can be avoided. As Mr. Waring himself says, "Things seen are mightier than things heard." During a representation the player must of necessity shut out or obscure the playwright, who must be satisfied with the homage of the thinking few and the collection of his fees.

Mr. Waring is, perhaps, a little inconsistent in his estimate of the intellectual calibre of audiences. In one part of his address he accorded them "unstinted praise for one very serviceable virtue—that of common sense." They will detect in an instant, he said, a solecism or an absurdity which has wholly escaped the notice of anxiously-interested experts. Nay, "it is the audience which teaches the actor how to play his part. His best points are frequently not made until continual contact with the audience has developed them; and it is this magnetic reciprocity between actor and audience which gives to a performance that smoothness and suggestive detail which is very often absent on a first night, no matter how carefully rehearsed a play may have been." But if an audience is able to do all this is it not able to do still more? Mr. Waring will have it that "the public cannot distinguish between the part and the actor—that is to say, they will give all their commendation to the interpreter of the good part, no matter how it may be played, while the poor patient player who is working his heart out over the bad part, and, perhaps, is entirely instrumental in keeping up the fabric of the play, is forgotten as soon as the curtain is down, and is sometimes voted a bore and a nuisance, if not designated a downright duffer." This hardly coincides with our experience, or, we should say, with that of other *habitués* of the theatre. Applause is naturally bestowed upon the sympathetic characters of a drama, but it does not follow, therefore, that the onlookers are not keenly appreciative of the skill exhibited in the portrayal of the unsympathetic *personæ*. Your "villain" is hissed when he comes before the curtain, but that is the highest compliment an audience can bestow upon him. If by "bad" part Mr. Waring means simply one that is small or ungrateful, he may equally be assured that ability in the interpretation of that *rôle* does not go unnoted or unrewarded.

Mr. Waring, by the way, upholds the right of audiences to express in the most emphatic manner their disapproval (if they do disapprove) of the entertainment submitted to them. "If they think that a piece on a first night does not come up to their expectations, let them hiss it by all means." "The production of a new play is the most tentative thing in the world; no one, however experienced, can foretell its value, and it is surely better to know the truth at once, even if the means of learning it are painful



for the moment." On the other hand, it should be remembered that a first-night audience is an exceptional one, and by no means representative of the average audiences of which Mr. Waring speaks, and which are the mainstay of the stage. Many a play has lived, and lived long, after a first-night condemnation. With some other suggestions of Mr. Waring's many will sympathise. He proposes "some curtailment" of the "deafening receptions" sometimes offered to popular artists at *premières*, and does so on the ground that they salute an artist as a conqueror "before he has fought his battle." He wishes, too, that it were possible to abolish, once for all, the custom of calling actors and actresses, singly or in couples, in front of the curtain at the end of an act. Finally, he devoutly hopes that the day or night is not far distant when the cry of "speech, speech!" from the front of the house will be heard no more. "These little good-natured weaknesses on the part of our audiences do, in my humble opinion, tend to lower our dignity." Possibly some playgoers may lay these words to heart, though we fear that upon the ears of the large majority they will fall unheeded. That Mr. Waring should be severe upon the rudeness and ingratitude of those graceless persons who on a "souvenir" night hiss the performers because they happen not to be satisfied with the "souvenir," is well enough. It should be observed, however, that these people are usually not regular theatre-goers, but disappointed roughs, and that the remedy lies in the hands of the managers themselves. Let the "souvenir" business be abolished. It has been carried to a regrettable extreme, and, if not checked at once, may debauch unduly the minds of the greedy and unscrupulous.

Altogether, Mr. Waring's address to the Playgoers' Club was, it will be seen, at once frank and suggestive, revealing some interesting phases of the typical actor's feeling in regard to the public for whom he works. We have shown that in some respects the discourse was inconsistent and over-pessimistic; and, in conclusion, we would emphasise the danger on the part of a player or players of depreciating over-much the intellectual equipment of playgoers. Incidentally, Mr. Waring expresses his belief that *The Benefit of the Doubt* had so (comparatively) short a run because "it made too great a demand on the mental faculties of the audience." There is no occasion to believe anything of the kind. The general tone of the play was painful; the acts were over-long; the last act was somewhat of an anticlimax. These facts alone afford a sufficient explanation of the failure of the work to attract the general public, and render unnecessary the assumption that that public did not understand what it condemned.

## Portraits.

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### MISS LILY HANBURY.

C OUSIN of Miss Julia Neilson, Miss Hanbury made her first appearance at the Savoy Theatre in 1888, on the same occasion as her relative; the play *Pygmalion and Galatea*, the part Myrine. That she had talent was evident at once; but it was evident also that a course of severe training would be required to fit her for her profession. This necessary "clipping and taming," as Miss Mary Anderson has phrased it, she obtained when, after playing in two other revivals of Mr. Gilbert's plays, arranged for the purpose of introducing Miss Neilson to the public, she banished herself from London to set to work to gain experience and proficiency in the art of acting by a long provincial tour. She made good use of her time, as is shown by the fact that in 1890 Mr. Thorne gave her an engagement at the Vaudeville Theatre, and parts in *Clarissa* and *Miss Tomboy*. From Mr. Buchanan's imitations of old comedy it was not a long step to melodrama pure and simple, and this step Miss Hanbury took by joining Mr. Wilson Barrett when he opened the New Olympic Theatre, and supporting him in *The People's Idol*, a play which unfortunately belied its title by conspicuously failing to gain any considerable amount of popularity. Revivals of *The Stranger* and *The Lights o' London*, and the production of *The Acrobat*, gave her useful opportunities for acquiring a certain breadth of style which very often can be picked up nowadays only in melodramatic plays. Then Miss Hanbury turned to a very different class of work, appearing as the young and fascinating widow in Mr. Weedon Grossmith's clever little comedy, *A Commission*. It was as Lady Noeline in *The Amazons* that Miss Hanbury made her first really notable success. Then came her Mrs. Allingham, the jealous wife in *The Benefit of the Doubt*. The various sides of this character she brought out with wonderful skill, and it would be difficult to find any actress whose interpretation of the subtle moods and phases of a passion that hovers betwixt the regions of tragedy and comedy could have been cleverer or more complete. When the far too short run of this piece came to an end, Miss Hanbury was engaged by Mr. Alexander for *The Prisoner of Zenda*, in which she plays with stately grace the part of Madame de Mauban, a character giving her less scope for the display of her undoubted powers than either of the two just mentioned, in which she so conspicuously shone.

## The Round Table.

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### THE ETHICS OF PLAY-LICENSING.

BY ROBERT BUCHANAN.

IT seems that the Licenser of Stage-Plays is beginning to exercise his prerogative. He has refused to "pass" a very queer piece of modernity by Mrs. Oscar Beringer, and he has declined, after blessing Mr. Wilson Barrett and the Early Christians, to countenance a Biblical play called *Joseph of Canaan*, the objection being, I am told, not to Mrs. Potiphar, but to any sort of drama based on incidents in the Bible. I am delighted to find that the new Licenser really means business. The more he suppresses, and the more he bungles, the better for the future of the theatre; and the sooner he will soar away in fiery vapour from the nest which he is preparing in the manner of the conventional phoenix.

I know this Licenser; he comes from Fogland, where the Early Christian drama and the nude burlesque ladies come from. Early in the present year of grace he had submitted to him a four-act play, partly of my making, *The New Don Quixote*, and no sooner had he read it than he avowed that no power on earth would make him countenance its representation. No, I anticipate! He first summoned to a solemn conclave those supreme authorities on Art and Literature, my Lord Lathom and Sir Spencer Ponsonby Fane. Fortified with their opinion, which was even more adverse than his own, he refused the license; but he at the same time intimated to Mr. Bouchier, a young and innocent manager who had accepted the piece, that he might consider an "amended" version. With an artfulness wonderful in so virgin an impresario, Mr. Bouchier managed to discover where the offence lay; for, mark you, Mr. Redford absolutely declined to give text or verse to the Authors, or, indeed, to advise them directly at all, because (so runs the official formula) "of authors *as such*" he, the Licenser, who has the power to strangle, and suffocate and pillory them, "has no official cognisance!" Well, I plucked up heart of grace, and sent in an "amended" version—a version so little amended that only an official in Fogland could have seen any difference. This version was



"passed," and shortly afterwards the play was copyrighted by Mr. Bouchier at a *matinée*; so that *The New Don Quixote*, whatever its future fate may be, is duly licensed and franked as inoffensive by the Official Authority on Stage Morals.

Meantime, a little *contretemps* had occurred. My friend Mr. Bouchier, uneasy at the failure of certain so-called "sexual" plays, and feeling that the public was craving for livelier matter—that, in fact, the spirit of the Palais Royal and the genius of the *gaudriole* were more in request than serious dramatic work—suggested to me that he should postpone our play till the late autumn, and produce in the meantime something a little more skittish. To this postponement, as it contravened our agreement, I strongly objected, and I suggested as an alternative that Mr. Bouchier should pay us a forfeit and return our play; and I wish to add that, in acceding to my wishes, Mr. Bouchier acted in the handsomest possible manner, even to the extent of giving, free of charge, the copyright performance to which I have alluded.

Now, I am not recording these purely personal concerns for the mere purpose of airing a grievance. I have a more philanthropic object in view—that of letting less experienced dramatists know what pitfalls lie in their way, and how to avoid trouble in dealing with Mr. Redford. I can assure them, to begin with, that the new Licensor is a most liberal-minded man, a man with no small prejudices, a sunny go-as-you-please and take-it-easy sort of man. He does not object to Nudity, or to honest Horse-play; he is charmed when comic artistes want political crackers, "party" crackers, to let off; he will clap you on the shoulder if you eulogise Doctor Jim and insult General Booth; if you want to describe drunkenness in drawing-rooms he will give you the benefit of the doubt; if you desire to import frisky French farces, he will smile upon you amiably; in short, he is a thoroughly good fellow, a man of the world, like Mr. Sparkler, with "no bigod nonsense about him." What he will *not* endure (and here, I assure you, he is quite in touch with Lord Lathom, Sir Spencer Ponsonby Fane, and Society in general) is anything bordering on open indecency; and the most indecent thing in the official eye is any work implying that *Go-as-you-please-but-let-institutions alone* is not a motto for the thoughtful dramatist. You may grumble at this, as I did; but I assure you that Mr. Redford has public opinion with him, and that nine Able Editors out of ten would agree with him that discussion of social morality on the stage is in the worst possible taste.

Now, to illustrate the state of things by my own case. I am not going to give away the plot of my piece—or rather our piece,

for, as I said, I have a partner. The subject was a rather strong one, but Mr. Redford did not object so much to *that*; the heroine was not too virtuous, but naturally, after recent concessions, he *could* not object to *that*. The head and front of the offending was a situation at the end of the third act, and that situation closely resembled, in everything but psychology, one licensed in the *Maitre des Forges*, *The Ironmaster*, and my own *Lady Clare*. A man marries a woman, and discovering, when they are alone together on the wedding night, that she does not *love* him, informs her that they must live apart and be "husband and wife only in name," until such time as she can care for him as a wife should care for her husband. He goes to his room, she retires to hers, and the curtain falls.

There is nothing very new in this situation, as I tell it, and nothing, I feel, very shocking; but it was the *nuance* of the thing, the hidden enormity of the thing, the foul suggestiveness of the thing, that appalled Mr. Redford! The idea that any sane being, in our present state of Society, should pose as "The Man who Wouldn't"—perhaps, after all, that is the real objection to *Joseph of Canaan*—was, to the official mind, atrociously and unutterably indecent. I cannot penetrate to the subtle recesses of the official mind. I have never dwelt in Fogland, where the Early Christian drama and the burlesque ladies come from; but I am perfectly sure, all the same, that Mr. Redford was reckoning with his supporters, and that ninety-nine out of every hundred "Society" men, including his co-authorities at the Lord Chamberlain's, would agree with him in finding salaciousness in that situation. I, of course, see no harm in it; but I am not a Society man, and my morals have been dreadfully neglected. I am Philistine enough, indeed, to feel shocked sometimes by the go-as-you-please and dress-as-you-please vulgarities which delight Mr. Redford.

Now, for my Moral. Exile though I am from pure Society, I never write without one.

The moral is: to amend the Licenser of Plays, short of abolishing him altogether, you must amend Fogland, amend Society, shame out of England the Satyr in a dress suit who finds filth and foulness in work which comes pure and wholesome from the artist's brain; who sees in a noble, high-minded, and beautiful character, rejecting love by purchase, and holding marriage as a spiritual sacrament, only "A Man who Wouldn't;" who giggles and applauds when women, by indecent exposure, degrade their womanhood on the stage, and when men, by indecent and ribald attacks on men nobler than themselves, degrade their manhood. The Licenser of Plays only exists on the suffrages of this Satyr;

he himself, the Licensor, is only a representative, an adumbration, of the ignorance, the unintelligence, and the bigotry of the great mass of Society. To reform *him*, to abolish *him*, you must reform and abolish much that is evil and detestable in our national life. All great changes come from within, and it is within that our Morality, like our Religion, is corrupt. Meantime, the work of the playwright has to be degraded to the level of the so-called governing classes, who have neither soul nor ears for any real Drama at all. *The New Don Quixote* could be witnessed without a blush by the pure woman who sits this day on the Throne of England, or by any of her daughters or her granddaughters; but I am quite sure that it would have outraged the morality of Lord Rochester or Charles II., and it is by *that* kind of morality that the modern dramatist has to be judged, and asphyxiated!

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## MISS KATE VAUGHAN.

BY JOHN HOLLINGSHEAD.

IN the course of a few weeks a special performance will be given at the Gaiety Theatre, the scene of her chief triumphs, in honour of Miss Kate Vaughan. Nor can it be said that the tribute is in any way undeserved. Miss Vaughan has the merit of being the founder of a distinct school of dancing. Her style is a happy blending of the theatre and the ball-room. Delicate health always shut her out from the severe training of the Italian school, and the painful gymnastic exercises necessary to attain proficiency in point-dancing, pirouettes, and the various movements associated in the old days with the fame of Cerito, Carlotta Grisi, Lucile Grahn, and Taglioni, and in modern days with the stars of a hundred Alhambra ballets. The severe discipline and the mechanical appliances of Milan, Vienna, Moscow, and Paris were spared her, but she had the advantage of tuition in a place—the Grecian Saloon—where Therése Cushnie, Milano, Deulin, Flexmore, Bolenó, M. Leclercq, Carlotta Leclercq, and many others had done much for pantomime and ballet-dancing by hard practice and instinctive talent. Their work was appreciated far beyond their narrow parochial limits. When Petipa left Her Majesty's Theatre—the high temple of the ballet in its palmiest days—his successor was Flexmore, who, like the famous Wieland, was merely a young man from Hoxton. Miss Vaughan's mistress was Mrs. Conquest, a lady who turned out a number of promising pupils, and many of them became singers and actresses, and none of them regretted their



ballet-girl education. It gave them ease and grace on the stage, while, as in the case of Madame Florence Lancia and Miss Marion Hood, it probably improved the strength of their voices.

At the Gaiety Theatre Miss Vaughan made her first appearance with her own company of dancers, forming, with herself, a quartette, who visited several places every night on the "turn" system. They stepped in and out of the current burlesque—a version of the perennial *Forty Thieves*—when Mr. J. L. Toole was the leading companion of Miss Nelly Farren. Though the Kate Vaughan dance was called "the Parisian quadrille," it was really our good old bogie friend the "can-can," got, as the sporting people say, by the First Empire out of the Revolutionary Carmagnole. That wretched English sham—that delusive fraud—called a "Licensing System" and its administrators being more alarmed at names than at facts and realities, the word "can-can" was discreetly dropped and the "Parisian quadrille" put in its place.

Miss Vaughan's first regular engagement at the Gaiety did not begin until the production of *Little Don Cæsar*. She had just returned from Paris, after playing a prominent and eccentric pantomimic part in a piece by M. Gondinet at the Théâtre des Variétés. Mr. J. L. Toole had gone to America, and his place was taken by Mr. Edward Terry; Miss Farren remained, as she always was from the opening, a pillar of the theatre; Mr. E. W. Royce—a provincial "find"—was engaged, and thus the famous quartette was formed, which gambolled so well together for so many years; and contributed so much to the harmless "gaiety of nations."

The happy peculiarity of this quartette was that no member interfered with any other member. They had all their separate and peculiar styles; they mixed like the well-selected ingredients of a salad, or the voices of a well-organised glee party. Burlesques were changed in name, costume, and music, but the quartette remained. It was not withered by age, nor was its infinite variety staled by custom. It doubtless grinned through a horse-collar, but the grin was pleasant, and the horse-collar was bright to look upon. What W. S. Gilbert started was ably carried on by F. C. Burnand, Robert Reece, and Henry J. Byron.

Miss Vaughan's dancing soon become a feature of these burlesques. It was like nothing that had gone before it. The Italian school had become almost a tradition, as the Alhambra, owing to licensing difficulties, had become a theatre and not a music-hall; the idea of the serpentine dance had only been indicated by Donato, the one-legged dancer, and no one appeared to develop it. The "high-kicking" step—the pump-handle

movement—had been introduced by Miss Kiralfy, with her brothers Imrie and Bolossy, at the Alhambra, and this had been further popularised at the Islington Philharmonic by the young lady who was not ashamed to own the homely name of “Wiry Sal.” Miss Vaughan turned her back on all these predecessors, and produced a dance which combined minuet, can-can, and waltz, with some of the harmonious body-movements which came originally from Egypt, through Africa and the Moors, into Spain, and are the most striking characteristics of Spanish dancing. A light form, great taste in dress—especially in lace—a lady-like manner, subdued action, no visible effort, pleasant ease, rhythm, lines of beauty—these were some of the elements of a Kate Vaughan *pas seul*. Her dancing would have delighted the sarcastic old lady of the last century who described the pointed efforts of the Prima Ballerina, when first introduced from Italy at the King’s Theatre in the Haymarket, as the stalking across the stage of a pair of compasses.

As a member of the Gaiety company, Miss Kate Vaughan behaved as a distinguished pupil might behave in the greatest conservatoire in Europe. Her work was pleasantly done, without grumbling or fretful ambition; she always showed the most loyal desire to aid the management at all times and at all seasons, and honestly earned, not only her *honorarium*, but the regard and friendship of her director.

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## THE CLAUQUE.

BY ARTHUR ESCOTT.

NO little interest was lately excited in Paris by a statement, made by M. Fouquier, that the subsidised theatres there—the Français, the Grand Opéra, the Odéon, and the Opéra Comique—had finally decided to abolish the *claque*. Rumours to this effect have been rife at various times during the last twenty years. For a brief period, indeed, such a revolution in the theatrical world was actually effected at the Comédie Française. Soon after the production of *Les Fourchambault*, in 1878, two youths of the École Polytechnique waited upon M. Perrin, the manager of the theatre. Their fellow-pupils had permission to remain out until midnight to see M. Augier’s new comedy, and wished to book a hundred and sixty seats. Nearly every place had been taken, but M. Perrin saw a means of extricating himself from the difficulty. “The *claque*,” he said, “occupies one hundred and thirty seats in the parterre. For once a comedy like *Les Fourchambault* can afford to do without their

support. Will you have the seats usually set apart for them? As you will come in school dress, nobody will mistake you for the 'chevaliers du lustre.'" On the following night the hundred and sixty came, M. Perrin being in the theatre to observe the result. He had good reason to be satisfied; the audience showed that it was quite able to see all the fine points in the play. So, wisely or unwisely, the manager put an end to the *claque*, which, however, had to be reinstated shortly afterwards. Even in France, it would seem, some old institutions can die hard, especially in the theatrical world. Nor, M. Fouquier to the contrary notwithstanding, is there any immediate prospect of the suppression of the *claque*. "On en a parlé," writes a well-informed Parisian friend to *The Theatre*, "depuis longtemps, et on revient à ce sujet au moment de la saison morte; mais vous pouvez être sûr qu'il n'y a rien dans ces bruits."

The *claque*, as was stated many years ago in these pages, would seem to have originated in ancient Rome, where it attained considerable dimensions. The privilege of applauding was granted to a private company under conditions previously agreed upon. The *claqueurs*—hand-clappers—are called *juvenes* by the later historians, and were led by *curatores*, who had the liberal remuneration of forty thousand sesterces. Suetonius informs us that in the reign of Nero there was a corps of about five thousand young men regularly trained up to the puffing profession. This supporting column was organised on the most approved military principles, the gradations of rank and duty being most delicate and elaborate. The plaudits were mainly of three kinds: *bombus*, or a long and low murmuring; *testae*, clapping with the hands; *imbrices*, thunders of applause. Then there was a way they had of making crackers of their fingers, or uttering exclamations, or waving the flap of their togas as our dainty occupants of the dress-circle may be now seen doing with their playbills, their handkerchiefs, or their fans. The Emperor Aurelian even took the precaution to distribute among the people strips of cloth to take the place of the toga in the machinery of applause. Some idea may be formed of the extent to which the *claque* at certain periods was carried from the fact that whenever Nero condescended to appear on the stage all the spectators were expected to applaud on pain of death.

In France, the *claque*, if it has never attained these formidable proportions, is none the less an institution of great importance; and though its existence is well known, and although it pursues its calling with nearly the same publicity as a charitable society, no great public effort seems to have been made to counteract its influences and stamp it out. But, indeed, fraud is never more suc-



cessful than when it is practised openly and unabashed. It is very strange, but people somehow will much more readily allow themselves to be circumvented by the loud assertions and the familiar legerdemain of a Cheap John who regularly visits their fair, and whom they know to be a cheat, than by the honest-sounding offer of a knave who essays to play the card-trick among them for the first time. In certain theatres as many as two complete companies of *claqueurs* have been known to be performing their functions at the same time. The scientific organisation of the *claque* as an official and recognised institution, so to speak, is almost of equal date with the introduction of seats into the pit. Hired applauders, writes Andrieux in a note to the *Mémoires de Mlle. Clairon*, being no longer able to conceal themselves among the audience after standing in the pit was done away with, resolved to show an open front, and to constitute themselves into a sworn confederacy. "The *claque*," said one, "is as necessary in the centre of the pit as the great lustre is in the middle of the roof." Many are of his opinion still; in recent times a *chef de claque* has been known to sell his services for fifty thousand francs.

The *claqueurs* are sometimes called *romans* from their organisation after the manner of the Roman legions, and *chevaliers du lustre* (knights of the chandelier) from the place they occupy in the theatre. They have a commander (*chef*) and lieutenants. The staff consists of *intimes*, or habitual *claqueurs*, who enter free; *lavables* (from *laver*, in theatrical slang meaning "to sell"), who pay reduced entrance-money; and *solitaires*, or theatre-goers, who, in order to gain their seats in good time, are allowed, on paying, to enter with the *claque*, on condition merely of not hissing. Among leaders of the *claque* who have attained a very high reputation, MM. Sauton and Porcher must be placed in the first rank. Curious among the literature of this singular profession is the *Mémoires d'un Claqueur*, contenant la théorie et la pratique de l'art du succès, &c., par Robert (Castel), ancien chef de la compagnie des assurances dramatiques, chevalier du lustre, commandeur de l'ordre du battoir, membre affilié de plusieurs sociétés claquantes, &c. Paris, Constant Chantpie, 1829. 8vo. Sauton's *modus operandi* may be briefly described. *Claqueurs* were always at the beck and call of the manager. Each had a special function assigned to him. The "commissaire" loudly expatiated upon beauties of detail; the "rieur" laughed at every "good thing;" the "pleureur" wept at pathetic *endroits*; the "chatouilleur" kept his neighbours amused; the "bisseur" encored.

Some idea may be formed of the ludicrous seriousness with

which the *claqueurs* look upon their calling by the following letter which was addressed to Rachel. In a new part her first appearance was greeted with great applause; on the second night popular estimation seemed to have diminished, and she complained that the hirelings had not done their duty. It turned out that the leader had been ill that evening, and that his place had been supplied by a *confrère* from another theatre. This man wrote to the complaining actress thus:—"I cannot, Mademoiselle, remain under the obloquy of a reproach from such lips as yours! The following is an authentic statement of what really occurred. At the first representation I led the attack in person no fewer than thirty-three times. We had three acclamations, four hilarities, two thrilling movements, four renewals of applause, and two indefinite explosions. In fact, to such an extent did we carry our applause that the occupants of the stalls were scandalised, and cried out '*A la porte!*' My men were positively attenuated with fatigue, and even intimated to me that they could not again go through such an evening. Seeing such to be the case, I applied for the manuscript, and, after having profoundly studied the piece, I was obliged to make up my mind for the second representation to certain curtailments in the service of my men. I, however, applied them only to MM. —, and if the office I hold affords me the opportunity, I will make them ample amends. In such a situation as that which I have just depicted, I have only to request you to believe firmly in my profound admiration and respectful zeal, and I venture to entreat you to have some consideration for the difficulties which surround me."

It is needless to say that this curious institution has never existed in England, though its place has to some extent been supplied by the puff direct and indirect. Fortunately, our audiences, as a rule, do not require to be told what is deserving of admiration. The *claqueur* plays the same part as a bribed representative of the people does in the House of Commons, or as a packed jury would in a court of law. Macaulay's description of the practices resorted to for the purposes of expanding the fame of Robert Montgomery might, with the variation of a single word, be taken as a further definition of the *claque*. "At present," says the essayist, "we too often see a writer attempting to obtain literary fame as Shakspeare's usurper obtains sovereignty. The publisher plays Buckingham to the author's Richard. Some few creatures of the conspiracy are dexterously disposed of here and there in the crowd. It is the business of these hirelings to throw up their caps, to clap their hands, and utter their *vivats*. The rabble at first stare and wonder, and at last join in shouting for shouting's sake; and thus a crown is placed on a head which

has no right to it by the huzzas of a few servile dependents." Yet M. Sarcey, though not a thick-and-thin advocate of the system, once pointed out in the *Temps* that it may at times have a useful effect in Paris. It is certain, he admits, that a *claque* imposing admiration upon an audience who do not feel it is a barbarous thing. On the other hand, an intelligent and discreet *claque*, stimulating the audience to perceive dramatic beauties, and imparting more precision and energy to spontaneous manifestations, would not merit the harsh terms applied to it. "In a drawing-room, where all the guests are intimate friends of the host, the conversation and the dance may be left to come by themselves; neither aid nor encouragement is needed. In large balls, where there is no other bond between the guests than the place in which they meet, the reverse is the case. The gaiety must be kept up, a centre of attraction is required. It is the same with French audiences in our own day. Except at the first two or three representations of a piece, where each man knows his neighbour, the audience is composed of persons strangers to each others, who have not received the same education, and who differ in their habits, ways of thinking, and sentiments. In such a state of things it is not easy to have a centre of attraction. The audience becomes cold, at least in appearance; and if the actors succeed in melting them a great feat is accomplished. Therefore the utility of the *claque* is undeniable. It draws together all the goodwill in the theatre, and indicates the direction in which it should go; and the spectator who might be deterred from applauding, by a fear that he would be alone in doing so, would take courage if he knew that many others were ready to follow his example." Perhaps, like many other things, the *claque* is neither absolutely bad nor absolutely good; but we may well congratulate ourselves, on the whole, that it has not been imported into this country.

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## REMINISCENCES OF HENRY HOWE.

### I.

BY JOHN COLEMAN.

**S**HORTLY before his last departure for America I received the following letter from Howe:—

57, STRAND WEST,  
28th August, 1895.

My dear John,

I am so sorry I did not see you when you called last week. I have been staying at Ramsgate, at my grand-daughter's, and have only just returned.



Thank you very much for your delightful books, they have been a great treat to me. Your graphic description of the deaths of my old friends has, however, somewhat depressed my spirits, leading me to fear I shall never return to dear old England.

I suppose it is the effect of increasing years.

God bless you, my dear John, and prosper you in all time to come.

Yours very sincerely,

HENRY HOWE.

Now, I happened to show this note to an accomplished young actress of my acquaintance, whose dead sister had cherished a romantic attachment to "Handsome Harry," my old friend's son. This young lady expressed an ardent desire to meet the old gentleman; hence I invited him to encounter her at dinner.

He came, and a most delightful evening we passed. The veteran "acted his young encounters o'er again" for our especial behalf.

"The name given me by my godfathers and godmothers," said he, "was Hutchinson, and I never thought to change it; but accident, which so often rules our lives, not only caused me to alter my name, but to change the current of my existence.

"My family had been Quakers for generations. I was brought up rigidly in their tenets, and sent to school at Ackworth, where I had for a chum no less a person than John Bright.

"You know that, with Quakers, all players are children of Belial, and the playhouse the 'pit of Tophet;' hence I never read a play and never entered a playhouse.

"When I came to town a dear friend and comrade aroused my curiosity, and I consented to accompany him to Drury Lane Theatre, going at half price to the two shilling gallery.

"The play was *Richard III.*, with Edmund Kean as the 'Last of the Plantagenets.'

"The spacious building was filled to overflowing, the pit and galleries packed so closely that only standing room was attainable. But this discomfort vanished before the dazzling lights, the magnificent costumes, and the splendid scenery, which alternately bewildered and enchanted me.

"The play, and above all, the little great man who seemed to sway the world around him, set my youthful blood on fire.

"When the curtain fell, amidst thunders of applause, I followed my friend out without a word, till we found ourselves on Waterloo Bridge looking down moodily on the river.

"'What's the matter?' inquired he.

"'Oh, nothing,' I replied, 'save that I am going to be an actor.'

"'You an actor?' he contemptuously replied, 'You are an ass.'

“ ‘Well, time will determine that,’ I rejoined. ‘Meanwhile it is late, so let us get home to bed.’

“From that time forth, I could think of nothing else but the theatre, and how I was to become an actor. The question troubled me by day and haunted me by night, till at length an inspiration came to me, born of the temerity and ignorance of youth. I would go to Kean himself and consult him. We were strangers, but what of that? He must feel sympathy for even a tyro who loved his divine art.

“At this time his powers were failing.

“To keep himself in touch with London, he had taken the bandbox of a theatre at Richmond, and he lived at a little house adjacent. So to Richmond I went.

“Although I knocked boldly enough at the door, my heart was in my mouth when I inquired ‘if Mr. Kean was at home.’

“ ‘Do you know Mr. Kean?’ inquired the housekeeper, sharply.

“ ‘Well, no—I can’t exactly say I do.’

“ ‘Mr. Kean don’t see anybody he don’t know,’ and she slammed the door in my face.

“At this moment a gentleman, who turned out to be Mr. John Lee, Kean’s secretary, appeared. ‘Hullo, hullo! what’s all this row about?’ he inquired.

“Coming to cues at once, I explained my business. My naïveté seemed to tickle Mr. Lee’s fancy, for he smiled as he explained that it was impossible to see Mr. Kean then, but ‘if you’ll be here to-morrow about two,’ said he, ‘I’ll see what can be done for you.’

“Punctually on the morrow at two, I was on the doorstep; so was Mr. Lee.

“ ‘Come in,’ he said.

“The next moment I was in the presence of a little man in a brown silk quilted dressing-gown, who was huddled up in a huge armchair.

“Before him was an untasted lunch. No, not quite untasted, for he was flinging the choicest morsels to half a dozen dogs who were yelping around him. Whilst I stood silently gazing at this strange picture, he looked up and fixed a great pair of fiery eyes upon me.

“At the sight of my white choker, straight collar, and broad-brimmed hat, the fiery eyes were fiery no longer; they were beaming with fun, and he burst out laughing.

“ ‘Why, cocky,’ said he, in a husky but kindly voice, ‘may I never’—and he paused to look again. ‘Why, you are a Quaker.’

“ ‘Y-y-yes, sir,’ I gasped.

“ ‘And so you want to be an actor, my lad?’

“ ‘If you please, sir.’

“ ‘Well, this is a rum go—can you starve?’

“ ‘Starve?’

“ ‘Yes! That is one of the first essentials you’ll have to learn. Unless you can eat turnips, you’re no good. I’ve made many a breakfast off a raw turnip; but there—can you handle the oars?’

“ ‘A little, sir.’

“ ‘Then come along and give us a spin on the river.’

“ So saying, he cast aside his dressing-gown, put on his coat, and although the day was hot and stifling, donned a hairy cap, and a camlet cloak lined with red, ornamented with a curly black dog-skin collar, and led the way down to the river. While I pulled, he took the helm and steered towards Eelpie Island.

“ All the way down he talked to me like a father, dissuading me from thinking of going on the stage. When we reached the eyot, I jumped ashore and helped him to land.

“ Evidently his visit was expected, for a buxom dame met him, at the door and showed him into a private snugery behind the bar.

“ ‘Now, young shaver, what are you going to have?’ he asked.

“ ‘A glass of claret, sir, if you please.’

“ ‘Claret, then, be it. What is it old Bruin the bear says? ‘Claret for boys, port for men, and brandy for horses.’ Brandy for me, Missis, with the usual accompaniment.’”

“ And what do you suppose the usual accompaniment was John?”

“ Soda, I assume.”

“ No, sir, ’twas cayenne pepper.”

“ Cayenne?”

“ Yes, and plenty of it, undiluted by anything less potent than the best cognac.”

“ When he had imbibed three or four glasses of this poisonous stuff, he began to ramble and talk wildly. I got alarmed, and, when at length he dropped off into a fitful snooze, in the arm-chair, I stole away on tiptoe, and, grievously disenchanted, made my way back to Hammersmith on foot.

“ His words made so deep an impression upon me that for a time I abandoned all thoughts of the theatre, and devoted myself assiduously to business. But it so chanced that, passing down Catherine-street one night, I saw a number of people struggling up a narrow passage, over which you may see to this day a harp and lyre. This place is now the *Echo* office. Then it was the celebrated Sans Pareil Theatre, presided over by the eccentric Smithson, immortalised by Charles Dickens, Douglas Jerrold, and others.



“Following the crowd I got a seat, without paying for it, and the play was again *Richard III.*, by one who called himself ‘A Distinguished Amateur.’

“On getting into conversation with a young fellow who sat next to me, I learnt that, like myself, he was stage-struck—like myself, he was anxious to play Richard, and he was there that very evening for the express purpose of taking the theatre to do so, and I soon further learned that if I would pay down ten shillings towards the night’s expenses I might appear as Tressel.

“I closed with the offer, and duly appeared in that character. My Tressel was wicked; my friend’s Richard was the very worst I ever knew, except when I sampled the crookback myself.

“Well, I dropped the Quaker pretty soon, and by dint of dinning old Kenneth, the agent, got an engagement at the old Victoria, to say ‘My lord, the carriage waits,’ at a very modest screw.

“Thence I migrated with Hammond to the Strand, where I played in *Pickwick*. After which I moved on to the ‘dust-hole’ (the old Queen’s in Tottenham Court Road) with Mrs. Nesbitt, and ultimately joined Macready at Covent Garden, where I opened as Lennox in his great production of *Macbeth*.”

“You remember the situation in the banquet scene, where that nobleman asks the King to sit?”

“I suppose I must have accosted Macbeth in a rather airy manner, for he accosted *me* after this fashion:—

“‘Good God, sir, this is not a ham and beef shop, but a regal banquet in a royal palace. You surely would never presume to keep your seat whilst addressing your liege lord? To your feet, sir, to your feet.’

“At the next rehearsal I sprang up with alacrity to deliver my lines, and brought down with even greater alacrity the ire of the great tragedian.

“‘Good God, sir, remember you are a nobleman and not a harlequin. Sit down, sir, sit down, speak your lines from the chair, sir, the chair.’

“‘Certainly, sir,’ I rejoined. ‘But yesterday you commanded me to rise, to-day you order me to sit. I can’t do both at the same time; which is it to be?’

“Macready gave an inarticulate growl, the only word I could distinguish being his favourite expletive ‘Beast!’ but old ‘Peg Leg,’ the prompter, told me to speak from my chair, and I did so.

“On leaving the theatre at the end of the rehearsal the hall porter said, ‘Mr. Macready wants to see you in his room, sir.’

"My heart sank into my boots, for I thought I was about to receive my *congé*.

"My surprise can be easier imagined than described when I tell you that Macready received me with a courteous warmth amounting to cordiality.

" 'Mr. Howe,' said he, 'I was in error at the rehearsal. The fact is I have so many things on my mind that I sometimes forget myself. I beg your pardon for my infirmity of temper. Sit down, sir. See! I have ordered another mutton chop and a pint of claret to drink to our better acquaintance.'

"This was my first and last tiff with Macready, and from that moment until the day of his death we were fast friends.

"When he went to the Haymarket, I went with him, and what a wonderful company it was! Besides himself there were Charles Kean, Phelps, Tyrone Power, Strickland, Wrench, Farren, Buckstone, Walter Lacey, Webster, Compton, O. Smith, Hemmings, Fred Vining, Little Clarke (who remained there as long as myself), Helen Faucit, Ellen Tree, Priscilla Horton, Mrs. Warner, Mrs. Glover, Mrs. W. Clifford, Mrs. Frank Mathews, and a score of others whose names time will not forget, though I do.

"I joined to do anything, and remained to do everything, high, low, Jack, and the game, during my forty years' engagement."

Over our cup of coffee, he added with a sigh, "I didn't live in the time of great salaries—but I paid my way and contrived to put away a bit. I have saved five pounds a week for the rest of my life. But I want to make it seven; that is why I am taking this last trip to America.

"It is rather a risk at my time of life, but my comrades are considerate. Irving is most generous and thoughtful, and the people on the other side treat me like a prince, so I'll chance it."

When the time came for parting, my young friend, with timorous audacity, said, "Please may I kiss you, for Harry's sake?"

"My dear young lady," he responded, surprised and delighted, "you make me young again. God bless you, child."

Two days later I received the following note:—

*Saturday Morning.*

Dear Coleman,—

I am just off at half-past six for America. I am wretched and miserable—indeed, not myself at all.

Yours always,

H. H. HOWE.

P.S.—God bless you, and give you all health, luck, and fortune.

This was destined to be our last dinner party. Our first (which, strangely enough, seemed to foreshadow our last)

occurred at the Old Manor House in Leeds, longer back than I care to count. My guests were Buckstone, Compton, Howe, and Chippendale and his wife.

A high old time we had. After the second bottle "Chip" adjourned for forty winks.

Sympathising with his old colleague's increasing infirmity, Compton sententiously remarked: "Poor old 'Chip,' his acting days are nearly over."

"Aye! aye!" replied Buckstone, "and I am sure I don't know what we shall do without him. First old men worth their salt are not to be picked up every day in the week."

"Never mind, governor," responded Howe, cheerily, "I have played everything in the comedies but Sir Anthony and Sir Peter, and I am ready and willing to tackle 'em both."

Half an hour later, when the old man returned, refreshed by his nap, it was time for Buckstone's nap. When he left us, Chippendale mumbled: "Poor old governor, he is breaking fast! Ah, when he goes, and we follow suit, what is to become of the old comedy, I should like to know?"

Alas! they are all gone now, and I fear the old comedy has gone too.

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## II.

BY GEO. W. BAYNHAM.

Ripe in years and rich in honours, Howe has joined the majority at last. I was, I think, the last who grasped his hand at Waterloo when he started with the Lyceum company for what he then feared would be his last "outing" with the friend he so loved and all but worshipped, Sir Henry Irving. "This," he said, turning on me the still bright dark eye (the darker for that memorable white hair overshadowing it), "this is the first journey I was ever afraid of." As I watched his kindly face looking out of the window of the departing train, I somehow feared it would be his last.

My acquaintance with Howe began when the 'fifties were nearing the 'sixties. I was at the time comparatively a boy-actor (under an alias) at the Haymarket, the members of the company of which were not then over-generous to novices or interlopers. I was of course nervous, for I opened in *The Lady of Lyons*, with Helen Faucit and Barry Sullivan. Howe was the Beauséant, and gave me the most encouraging words I had ever received. We shared the same dressing room. In this room was held the memorable "Court of Uncommon Pleas." Shall I



ever forget those Saturday nights! It was held subsequently, I believe, on other nights besides. The terms of subscription were a couple of bottles of Irish whisky, a pound of lump sugar, and a lemon. The members—Buckstone, president; old “Chip,” who, as stage manager, was only too easy and kind; Henry Compton, wise, witty, and caustic, but really tender-hearted as a child; Rogers, with his irrepressible tales of his Malden garden’s growth; George Brad Coe; clever “little Clark;” Edwin Villiers. So far as I know, with the exception of myself, the sole survivor of that genial crew is William Farren, then our *jeune premier*. Of all the members, Howe was the brightest and most genial. We never called him anything but “Quaker.” He was never tired of telling us tales of his Quaker days—how in those days of broad brims and drab shorts he had two collars made for his broad cloth coat; one straight, “the other a roll.” He used to take off the one and hook on the other, that his garb might not attract attention when he went, as he used to do three times a week, to the Covent Garden pit to see Macready.

Howe’s anecdotes about the latter were some of the best, and were all true. One, I recollect, was of a practical joke he and some others meant to play on an actor named Gough, who, similarly dressed, was playing to Macready in one of Knowles’ Roman pieces. Seeing, as they thought, Gough ascending the stairs leading to his dressing room with his back toward them—Howe and some others “ballooned” him to the top of the stair, case, heedless of his entreaties and remonstrances. Arrived at his destination, the “ballooned” faced them suddenly. It was Macready. Apologies, abject and many, of course followed. “We beg pardon, Sir, we thought it was Mr. Gough.” The tragedian, regarding them sternly, asked, “And does Mr. Gough *like* that sort of thing? Do you do it often to Mr. Gough?”

Frugal in his tastes and habits, Howe was spared the sadnesses and privations which but too often attend a precarious profession. His latter years were made more than happy by the generosity, kindness, and thoughtfulness of Sir Henry Irving. In his letters to me, he always wrote of him as “that princely Irving.” Howe was never happy but when at work—work which, he said, Sir Henry remunerated him at more than treble its value.

The last time I saw him at home was in that wonderful cabinet of stage curiosities, his room in the Strand. Harry, his son, was there. I had not seen the latter for many years. Either he looked so old, or his father so young, that at my first glance I scarcely knew the one from the other. Harry spent most of his evenings with his father, and a fonder father or a more devoted

son I have never known. Howe was never quite the same after that son's death.

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M. ARSÈNE HOUSSAYE.

BY RICHARD DAVEY.

IN M. Arsène Houssaye, well called "the last Parisian," we found the essential representative of a type of man now extinct, but as closely identified with the Paris of the past as is the boulevardier with the Paris of the present. He fascinated less by his work, none of which is of the highest quality, than by the magnificence of his appearance and the extreme charm of his manners. He carried into the last decade of this century that social distinction which is usually supposed to have been special to Paris in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It would require a most polished pen to do justice to his memory. In a certain sense he personally resembled the late Lord Leighton, who so forcibly recalled the well-known busts of Jupiter Olympus. But M. Houssaye had no trace of Semitic origin. He was the Jupiter of the Athenians, and not of the Stock Exchange. His great but perfectly-proportioned stature, the Grecian beauty of his features, the intelligence and brilliance of his eyes, and the mellow richness of his voice, formed so rare a combination of physical charms as to render him alike delightful. Possibly his excess of good looks was the real cause of his never having attained that rank in literature to which his natural ability entitled him. He conquered too easily, and had but to express a wish to be obeyed. Few men have passed through life knowing less of its darker side.

Arsène Houssaye came to Paris in 1833, when a very young man, having passed his childhood and youth in the somewhat circumscribed social circles of his native town, Laon. He had not been in the capital many days before he fell by chance into the company of Théophile Gautier, who was picture-gazing in the Louvre at the same time as himself. A chance observation brought the two men into conversation. Gautier, struck with the young stranger, invited him at once to the Rue du Doyenne, and forthwith launched him into the literary world. Houssaye next contracted a close friendship with Jules Sandeau, who had just quarrelled with Madame Dudevant, that famous lady who, by robbing him of half his name, made herself celebrated as George Sand. Houssaye wrote half a dozen novels in collaboration with Sandeau, but the majority of them have long since been forgotten. He had a natural affinity with the eighteenth century. His mother and grandmother had lived through the Revolution, and

had quickened his imagination with the spirit of the period which immediately preceded the Reign of Terror, so that, to use his own expression, "he was brought up on the traditions of a past which was far more real to him than the present in which he lived." His first genuine success was therefore a work which is worthy of enduring fame—*Portraits du dix-huitième siècle*—for which he invented a style wherewith to celebrate the eminent women of the greatest period of French social glory, which combines the purity of Diderot with the sparkle of Voltaire, and emits a picturesque brilliance of grace evidently borrowed from the canvases of Watteau, Greuze, and Fragonard. This book brought him fame and fortune, and presently Paris learnt to appreciate, not only his literary ability, but his conversational powers, which were unrivalled. He was as charming *en tête-à-tête* as any one of the wits who dazzled Walpole and delighted Voltaire. The wittiest of them all, Houssaye, by his attachment to the eighteenth century and its literature, paved, nay, showed, the way to the Goncourts, who, without imitating him, followed his lead, and landed themselves thereby among the immortals.

In *Le Roi Voltaire*, he wrote perhaps his best book, which Pontmartin somewhat nastily described as "un roi de comédie raconté par un directeur de théâtre." Then he turned his attention to the stage, and wrote several not very brilliant plays, fell in love with Rachel—or was it not the other way about?—and became for six years director of the Comédie Française. He was installed in this position by the Republicans of 1848, much to the disgust of the Royalists, who thought that because he had written so nicely of Louis XV. he must perforce be one of themselves. Under his directorship he had the hardihood to stage Victor Hugo, and did great service to a friend of his younger days, whose dramas seemed destined never to see the light again. His management of the Comédie Française was distinctly successful, though brief. On relinquishing it he became founder and conductor of *L'Artiste*, a periodical which did immense service to French literature. It afforded Flaubert the opportunity of introducing *Salambo* to an admiring public, and the Goncourts of recording their *Sensations d'Italie*. Houssaye was generous to rising literary men, and we owe him the perhaps questionable pleasure of the acquaintance of Zola, who, thanks to him, obtained an opening in the *Revue de Paris* for *Thérèse Raquin*. But although M. Houssaye has left something like a hundred volumes behind him, none of them are of superlative merit, although, to be sure, most of them contain pages of much elegance and originality.

His plays are witty and graceful, but are one and all poorly constructed. Although he was an admirable stage manager, he



was an indifferent playwright. His mind was essentially retrospective. Chance cast him into the nineteenth century, but he always lived, in his imagination, a hundred years ago. Hence he could never take the slightest interest in the "progressive" questions which agitated his contemporaries; and as to anti-theological disputes, he abhorred them. "I am a Catholic," he once said to me; "I have lived like a Pagan, and, please God, I shall die like a Christian"—and he did so. Nothing more edifying than his last hours can well be imagined. He passed away in a cloud of incense, and looked magnificently saintly on his death-bed. Notwithstanding his great age—he was considerably over 80—his features were still beautiful. His wife and son and two Sisters of Charity knelt at the bedside. A great number of very poor people whom he had benefited passed reverently in front of the corpse. "He did a great deal of good in his lifetime," said the parish priest who had attended his last hours. "He was never appealed to in vain; his hand was always in his pocket to assist the poor and the suffering." Strange human being! in whom two centuries mingled—the eighteenth and the nineteenth—and who represented much that was best in both, and also not a little over which it would be best to throw the veil of oblivion. He was the favourite son of fortune. If there is any truth in the adage that luck leads some men and only follows others, there is no doubt, in the case of Houssaye, luck led, for everything he touched turned to success and to gold. His books were read and reviewed with an enthusiasm distinctly above their merit. He speculated, and became enormously rich. Though he was of no particular birth, the greatest ladies of his time considered themselves distinguished by his acquaintance.

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### MISS MARY ANDERSON ON HER ART.

BY W. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

**I**N the opening paragraph of her *Few Memories*, Mrs. De Navarro, formerly so well known as Miss Mary Anderson, tells us why she was induced to pen and publish that account of her career upon the stage. "I have written these pages," she says, "more for young girls (who may have the same ambitions that I had) than for anyone else: to show them that the glitter of the stage is not all gold, and thus to do a little towards making them realise how serious an undertaking it is to adopt a life so full of hardships, humiliations, and even dangers." No one will quarrel with Mrs. De Navarro's intentions, which are obviously of the best; but one may be permitted to doubt whether she has succeeded in her aim. What,

as a matter of fact, do these *Few Memories* show? They show that Mary Anderson, a young, self-trained girl of sixteen, was able to secure at that tender age a *début* as Juliet; that within a few months she made, apparently, a genuine success in an important American city; that from that time onwards she never played anything but leading parts; and that, after about eight years' professional touring in the land of her birth, she was brought to England as a "star," and, as such, played two successful seasons in the leading English theatre—the Lyceum, London. Moreover, these *Memoires* show—what we knew already—that Miss Anderson's triumphs in her art introduced her to the best society in England. She herself confesses it. "I shall always owe," she says, "a debt of gratitude to my profession for opening to me the doors of the artistic and literary world of London. What a charming and helpful world it is!" In all this, surely, there is nothing calculated very seriously to deter the young woman who desires to try her fortune on the stage.

It is true that Miss Anderson's path as an actress was not always one of roses. She complains, for instance, of the way in which she was snubbed by her colleagues at her first rehearsal. We do not defend their rudeness; but may they not have resented the necessity of working with a Juliet only half-way through her teens, and only too clearly an absolute amateur? Unpleasant, no doubt, were some of her early experiences in America as a member of touring companies. "In the smaller towns," she says, "the inhabitants usually stared at us as though we were the menagerie of one of their yearly shows. Though we produced nothing but strictly legitimate plays, we realised with humiliation that we were classed with the lowest grade of entertainers. I remember, one afternoon, a small street urchin recognised me, and, calling together a crowd of boys, shouted in great excitement, 'Come along, boys, here's the circus; come on and have a free look at the circus.' . . . Such publicity in the streets became very painful to me. I dreaded being stared at and vulgarly remarked." Elsewhere in the volume she says: "I have had people bolt into my private sitting or dining room on the pretext of wishing to buy tickets for the theatre, or my photograph. I remember two well-dressed women, to all appearance ladies, boldly entering the room while I was at breakfast, seating themselves, and calmly requesting me to continue my meal. Their sole excuse for their cool invasion and rude questions was that they had seen me as Galatea the night before, and wished to know how I looked off the stage." This, I take it, occurred in the States. As for the street boys, it is to be feared that neither in England nor in America are they great respecters of

persons. Every well-known man and woman is liable to be disturbed by their unwelcome attentions.

Miss Anderson's other complaints are more to the purpose, though not much less trite. One has reference to the mental and corporeal strain imposed by acting under modern conditions. Lady Martin (Miss Faucit) once told Miss Anderson that, while she was playing with Macready, "her three nights a week so wearied her physically and mentally that, at the end of the acting season, the very beauties of Nature, of which she was passionately fond, had lost their charm for her, so deadened with overwork had become even her powers of appreciation." What would have happened to her if she had been on the stage in these days of seven, eight, and nine performances per week? Miss Anderson's view is that "a performance every night, and twice on Saturdays and holidays, makes the actor's life a kind of slavery." Perhaps so, in those cases in which the parts are heavy or the stamina of the player small; but, happily, those cases are not particularly numerous, and, where they exist, the labour (and the salary), being delighted in, no doubt physic pain. There is more force in another of Miss Anderson's jeremiads: "An actor is conscious that his work is always judged apart from circumstance; that nervousness, illness, weariness, and the many troubles that beset life, and for a time leave their shadows, are not taken into consideration while his efforts are being criticised. If his heart is breaking, he must conceal his sufferings to assume mirth; and if his gaiety does not seem spontaneous, his auditors will surely put it down to bad acting." But histrions are not the only public men and women who have to submit to this trial—a trial which comes sooner or later to all entertainers, whether they pace the boards or the platform, whether they speak by voice, or pen, or through any other medium.

No; Miss Anderson's quarrel with the stage (for she has a quarrel with it) goes much deeper than this. Her enthusiasm for her profession appears to have dwindled gradually away. She says that while on her voyage to England in 1883 she reviewed her past life as an actress with as much pain as pleasure. "My efforts had, as a rule, been successful; but the strain of constant travel, the absence of home comforts . . . the ever-changing hotels the responsibility of rehearsals, support, stage management, and, above all, the extreme publicity of the life, had already begun to be distasteful to me. The disappointments connected with the art itself—the painting one's pictures with one's own person in the full gaze of the public, the dependence upon inartistic people (often compelled to use the theatre as a trade) for carrying out most cherished conceptions, and the constant crumbling of ideals



—made me, young as I was, long to leave the stage for the peace and privacy of a domestic life.” After her first season in London she had a holiday in Kent, and there, she says, “the old feeling of discontent with the practice of my art came back with redoubled force, and my inborn love of retirement grew more and more imperative.” Next came a season in America, after which, successful though it was, this favourite of fortune “felt a greater desire than ever to leave the stage.” She tells us, finally, that during the last three years of her public life she (quoting Fanny Kemble) had “never presented herself before an audience without a feeling of reluctance, or withdrawn from their presence without thinking the excitement I had undergone unwholesome, and the personal exhibition odious.” To use her own words: “To be conscious that one’s person was a target for any who paid to make it one; to live for months at a time in one groove . . . and to be continually repeating the same passions and thoughts in the same words—that was the most part of my daily life, and became so like a slavery to me that I resolved, after one more season’s work, to cut myself free from the stage fetters for ever.”

I have made Miss Anderson speak so much for herself because I think her words support the conviction that she never really possessed the artistic temperament. To object to “publicity,” to “painting one’s picture with one’s own person,” to “excitement,” and to “continually repeating the same passions and thoughts in the same words,” and so forth, is obviously to strike at the foundations of the art of acting. Miss Anderson began, she informs us, by regarding acting “not merely as a delightful amusement, but as a serious art that might be used for high ends.” By what processes did she come to shrink from all its essentials and crave for the pleasures of privacy? I have a theory on the subject, which may be right or wrong. It is to the effect that Miss Anderson started as a stage-struck girl, with insufficient preparation as well as insufficient powers and sympathies. She had energy and perseverance as well as beauty, and contrived to maintain herself “at the top of the ladder” for a certain number of years. Lacking, however, the irresistible impulse which animates the highest type of artist, she lost interest in her profession, and was glad to leave it. For me, I confess, she was never much more than a graceful and intelligent novice, who persistently overtaxed her capacity. The “pictures” she “painted” were charming, but they were not magnetic or convincing. She was not, in my opinion, properly equipped for the rôles she undertook. Among the great, or even the fine, actresses of our time, I should refuse flatly to enroll her. She was always pleasing to the eye, but she did not touch

the heart or quicken the intellect. The reason for this, it seems to me, is made plain in the *Few Memories*, which are eminently readable, but perhaps almost too frank in their engaging self-portraiture.

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## THE AUTHOR OF *FOR THE CROWN*.

BY TIBURCE BEAUGEARD.

**A**MONG the few living French poets who have achieved success at the theatre in keeping up the traditions of the brilliant romantic school of 1830, initiated by Hugo, and continued by Bouilhet in *Mademoiselle Aïssé*, Augier in *La Ciguë* and *Les Parasites*, de Banville in *Deidamia*, *Les Fourberies de Nérine*, &c., M. François Coppée probably holds the first place in the estimation of the Parisian public, and this notwithstanding such gifted rivals as MM. Richepin, Bouchor, Parodi, and others. His reputation at home will no doubt be further enhanced by the recent success obtained at the Lyceum by his poetical drama, *Pour la Couronne*, so ably adapted by Mr. John Davidson for an English audience. The fascinating story of the experience of another poet who "woke in the morning to find himself famous" is repeated in the case of the author of *Le Passant*. All of us have heard how suddenly his success came to him, but few know of the trying difficulties the young poet had to overcome before getting his first play produced.

Unassisted by birth or position, M. Coppée was in early youth thrown on his own resources, and at an age when most men are still at college he was left with a mother and three sisters to provide for. He succeeded in obtaining a minor clerkship under government, but resolutely continued his studies at night. The predilections of the future author of *Intimités* for expressing his thoughts in verse had already manifested themselves, and, fortunately for him, he became acquainted with Catulle Mendès, who at once took an interest in the young poet's welfare, after having read some of his first attempts in poetry. "I advise you, however, to burn them," said the new-found friend to his *protégé*; "they show much promise, but are wanting in knowledge of the art of versification." Seeing how upset the sensitive young man was, Mendès kindly proceeded then to give him most invaluable advice, and further helped him by introducing him to his own literary circle. It was by this means that M. Coppée joined the group of the Parnassiens, at whose literary meetings at the Boulevard des Batignolles he was in the habit of reciting his poems, and even on one occasion took part in an amateur per-

formance of *Marion Delorme*, appearing as Didier to the Saverny of Mendès.

At length, in the year 1869, fortune, made lovelier in the shape of Mlle. Agar, smiled on the poet. The great actress, to whom M. Coppée submitted his first play, *Le Passant*, wanted to create the part of Silvia, and persuaded M. de Chilly, then manager of the Odéon Theatre, to produce the young author's work for her benefit. "My dear friend," said M. de Chilly to the poor poet, who was hoping that his piece would bring him in the five hundred francs required to defray the expenses of publishing his first volume of verse, "I should not like you to delude yourself. *Le Passant* will be played three or four times only. We give next week a big drama, written expressly for the Odéon by two established authors, which will run for one hundred and fifty nights at least. You understand, therefore, that your mere curtain-raiser cannot be played with such a piece. I would rather say so to you now than let you have hopes which can never be realised." The benefit took place, and the success was one of the most pronounced in the history of the contemporary drama. M. Coppée found himself famous in a day. His first volume of verse, *Le Reliquaire*, was sold to the last copy in the course of a week. Everyone wanted to see *Le Passant*, and hear the melodious and touching verses of the poet modulated by Mlle. Agar and by another great actress then unknown to fame, Mlle. Sarah Bernhardt, who played the part of Zanetto, the charming minstrel boy, with all the grace and the tenderness of an ingenue.

From that time the young poet took his place among the literary men and artists of the period. He not only won applause and celebrity—after the production of *Le Passant* the fair Parisians adopted the fashion of wearing neckties à la Coppée—but was invited by the Emperor to the Tuileries, and by Princess Mathilde to St. Gratien, where he became acquainted with Gautier, de Goncourt, Dumas, Flaubert, and Sainte Beuve. Soon afterwards, through the influence of the Princess, he obtained the position of librarian at the Senate, a post in which he was succeeded by another poet, Leconte de Lisle.

For the next five years M. Coppée was not successful at the theatre, though he produced three plays. To win public favour again, he had to go back for inspiration to the Italy of Boccaccio and the Renaissance, and wrote *Le Luthier de Crémone*, which was performed for the first time at the Comédie Française in 1876, M. Coquelin playing the part of Filippo, and Mlle. Baretta that of Giannina. The touching love story and self-sacrifice of the poor hunchback musician has been presented to



the London public on more than one occasion through the adaptations of Mr. Henry Neville and Mr. J. K. Jerome, and need not, therefore, be repeated here. This fine play, as everybody knows, has become one of the stock pieces of the Théâtre Français, and invariably ensures a large and sympathetic audience.

So far M. Coppée's reputation rested mainly as a dramatist on *Le Passant* and *Le Luthier de Crémone*, two short plays in which there was very little action and scarcely any plot. No one thought that the elegiac and sweetly sad turn of mind of our poet could conceive and produce such a grand and moving drama as *Severo Torelli*, which took the French public by storm when first performed at the Odéon Theatre in 1883. The story of the drama is at Pisa, at the end of the fifteenth century. The city has groaned for twenty years under the tyranny of Barnabo Spinola; and the inhabitants, no longer able to bear their unjust burdens, form a conspiracy to kill him. At the head of this conspiracy is Severo Torelli, the supposed son of an old patriot, Battista Torelli. The young Severo has pledged himself on the sacred host, and in the presence of his friends, to kill the tyrant. On returning home after the meeting of the patriots, he learns from his mother the story of his birth. Battista, the old citizen, had been twenty years ago condemned to death, and Donna Pia had knelt at the feet of the cruel Spinola for a remission of the sentence. Her beauty excited the lust of the tyrant, and, taking advantage of her forlorn condition, he had succeeded in making a disgraceful bargain with her. It had saved her husband's life, but resulted in the birth of her son Severo. The struggle occasioned by this awful confession in Severo's mind is depicted in some of the finest lines which M. Coppée has ever penned. On realising, however, the frightful use which Spinola has made of his power, all filial feelings vanish from Severo's heart. The thought of his mother's wrongs serves still further to nerve his arm against the universal tyrant. He rushes off to the crypt of the cathedral where Spinola is to be found, but just as he is springing on his victim—his own father—he finds himself pushed on one side, and his mother, Donna Pia, rushes past him, stabs her ravisher to the heart, and then turns the knife on herself.

The action of this drama reminds us at once of *Pour la Couronne*, in which the incidents move so rapidly before us that we are almost bewildered. The production of *Severo Torelli* was more than a success—it was a triumph. It is undoubtedly M. Coppée's greatest achievement, and the election of the author in the following year to the French Academy was mainly due to it. It is worthy of note that M. Albert Lambert fils, in creating the rôle of Severo Torelli, laid the foundation of his present high

reputation. *Les Jacobites*, written in 1885, and *Pour la Couronne*, suggested by a tour made in Austria a few years ago, are the last two contributions of M. François Coppée to dramatic art. Both pieces, it has been justly observed, contain a series of touching and thrilling incidents, each one of which is complete in itself, but detrimental to some extent to the dramatic effect of the play itself as a whole. We have not mentioned *La Guerre de Cent Ans*, since it has never been produced on the stage. This powerful drama, we must say, is considered by very able critics as the greatest effort ever made by M. Coppée in the lofty regions of epic poetry.

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### STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

APRIL 23rd, 1896.

BY T. EDGAR PEMBERTON.

WHEN Washington Irving spoke of the church spire of Stratford-on-Avon as the beacon, "towering amidst the gentle landscape," to guide the literary pilgrim of every nation to Shakspeare's tomb, he no doubt had his own appreciative countrymen chiefly in mind. But even he could not foresee what America would be to Stratford, or Stratford to America, in the year 1896. At a time when there has been too much said about "strained relationships," it forms one of the daintiest and at the same time the strongest of links between the two great nations. Thanks chiefly to the energy of the Hon. George F. Parker, the United States Consul now residing in Birmingham, Shakspeare's birthday has this year been celebrated in Shakspeare's county in right royal fashion. The time has been happily chosen for the long-promised visit of the United States Ambassador, the Hon. Thomas F. Bayard, to the Midlands. On the 21st inst., he was entertained at the thirty-second annual Shakspeare commemoration dinner of the Birmingham Dramatic and Literary Club, and on the immortal 23rd he fulfilled two most interesting duties at Stratford-on-Avon. Never did England and America more sympathetically shake hands than on that day, in the birthplace and resting-place of Shakspeare.

The Ambassador's first task was to dedicate in the church a stained-glass window, erected at a cost of 400 dols., received from American visitors to Shakspeare's tomb. His second was to present to the governors of the Memorial Gallery, on behalf of the Players' Club of New York, a fine portrait, by Oliver Lay, of Edwin Booth as Hamlet. A more welcome addition to the valuable and growing collection of the Gallery could not be made. It is a collection, too, that shows how closely knit together are



EDWIN BOOTH AS HAMLET.





English and American dramatic art. Here we see the buck that was shot in the park of Charlecote—Shakspeare's Charlecote—and was carried on the stage when Mary Anderson came to Stratford to play Rosalind; there you are face to face with the commanding portrait of Ada Rehan, who swept the stage of the pretty Memorial Theatre in her incomparable impersonation of Katherine; and if you ask the erudite librarian, Mr. W. Salt Brassington, he will show you a wonderful miniature of the gifted but erratic George Frederick Cooke, the first of English actors who visited and electrified the United States.

It is right that the Booth portrait—a small copy of which, by the courtesy of Mr. Edgar Flower, we are here enabled to place before our readers—should hang on Stratford walls. I well remember Edward Askew Sothorn saying to me: "See Edwin Booth play Hamlet, and you will see the most graceful and scholarly Shaksperian actor that ever trod the boards." Sothorn, who would have liked to play Hamlet himself, knew what he was talking about. And as you look at the refined and pensive face, that in an otherwise too dark toned picture the artist has deftly limned, you think of the actor's birth at Booth Farm, Harford County, Maryland, in the November of 1833, on a night so remarkable for brilliant meteoric showers, that his eccentric father's negroes opined that he was "born lucky," and would be privileged to "see ghosts." You think, too, of his early experiences with that wayward and exacting father, and of his first and unexpected appearance on the stage. This was at the Boston Museum in the September of 1849. Edwin Booth was then travelling with his father as his companion, and no idea of his taking part in the stage performances seems to have been mooted, until an overworked prompter asked him to "go on" in the small part of Tressel in Colley Cibber's version of *Richard III*. Having dressed himself for the character, the lad went to his father's dressing room. There, fully equipped for his great character of Glo'ster, and with his feet upon a table, sat Junius Brutus Booth, the sometime rival of Edmund Kean. Critically eyeing his anxious son, he asked, "Who was Tressel?" "A messenger from the field of Tewkesbury," was the reply. "And what was his mission?" "To bear the news of the defeat of the king's party." Without altering his position the tragedian showed signs of a ruffled temper. "How did Tressel make the journey?" he demanded. "On horseback," faltered Tressel, feeling there was something wrong. "Then, sir, where are your spurs?" thundered Richard. Poor Edwin had to confess that he had forgotten the spurs. "All right, take mine," said Richard. And so the boy unbuckled the great man's

spurs and fastened them to his own riding boots. When his short scene was over he returned to the dressing room to find his father seated in exactly the same position, and ready with the stern inquiry, "Have you done well?" "I think so," said the novice. "I'm glad to hear it," said the father; "put my spurs on again." And the spurs were rebuckled. How Edwin Booth subsequently won his own spurs is a matter of stage history. It was good to be at Stratford on Shakspeare's birthday, and to see Booth's portrait permanently placed where he, no doubt, would have best loved it to be. All honour to the New York Players' Club for the happy thought that prompted them to give Englishmen the chance of showing their appreciation of a great American actor.

In the evening the visitors to Stratford were able to see an exceedingly interesting representation, by Mr. and Mrs. F. R. Benson (prime favourites at the Memorial Theatre) and their excellent and enthusiastic company, of Shakspeare's much neglected *Richard II.* In 1815, at Drury Lane, Edmund Kean appeared as the weak and unhappy King, but only for some ten or twelve times. In 1851, Macready played the part twice at the Haymarket; and in 1857, Charles Kean, who mounted the piece superbly, acted it for eighty-five nights at the Princess's. Since then the play has practically lain upon the shelf, and Mr. Benson has, as it were, to re-create the character. He does so with remarkable success, and it is a bright feather in his cap. But, beautiful though much of it is, it is unlikely to become a popular acting play. Writing of it in 1793, the eminent Steevens says:—"The critics may applaud *Richard II.*, though the successive audiences of more than a century have respectively slumbered over it as often as it appeared on the stage. Garrick had once resolved on its revival, but his good taste at last overpowered his ambition to raise it to the dignity of the acting list." Mr. Benson has at least proved that such criticism as this is far too severe. For the Stratford revival, excellent and artistic scenery has been prepared by Mr. C. G. Cooke, chiefly from designs copied from contemporary authorities. It is curious to note, by the way, that in this play Shakspeare takes us quite near his own home. He places the "Lists at Coventry," on Gosford-green, which still exists, and must have been very familiar to him; and later he takes us to the Cotswolds, those lovely hills that, so to speak, form a "back-cloth" to Stratford.



"THE THEATRE," MAY, 1896.



*Photographed by Alfred Ellis, 20, Upper Baker St., N.W.*

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MISS ESMÉ BERINGER.



## Portraits.

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### MISS ESMÉ BERINGER.

**B**ELONGING to a remarkable family—her father a distinguished professor of music, her mother endowed with literary ability turned successfully at times into dramatic channels, and her sister one of the cleverest child-actresses seen for many years—Miss Esmé Beringer soon showed that her choice of the stage as a profession was fully justified by her capabilities. But it could hardly have been expected when, in 1893, she made her second *début*, separated from her early appearances by three years of school life, that she would so rapidly make her way to the front. Standing, as she now does, among the most promising of the younger actresses of the day, she has not to look back upon a long course of toil and drudgery. Her advancement has been made with rapid strides, and her clever playing in *The Benefit of the Doubt* and *The Late Mr. Castello* must have come as a surprise to those who had not noted her improvement with each character in style and power of characterisation during her engagement with Mr. Weedon Grossmith at the Vaudeville Theatre. Her Justina Emptage was an admirable piece of acting, hitting off neatly an unpleasant but unfortunately not uncommon type of young woman. Avice Bickerdyke was rather too much like Justina, perhaps; but Miss Beringer did what she could to keep them distinct. It is much to be hoped that she will escape the lot of many young players who pass from theatre to theatre, but give only one kind of impersonation wherever they may be; and that, having shown her ability to play one part, she may not be regarded by managers as a “specialist,” and kept to that part for the rest of her life. A sudden demand for someone to play Little Lord Fauntleroy in the place of Miss Vera Beringer was the immediate cause of Miss Esmé Beringer’s appearance, in 1888, “for the first time on any stage.” She did so well that she was afterwards frequently called upon to act as her sister’s substitute. In 1890 each appeared in Mrs. Beringer’s production of *Prince and Pauper* at the Gaiety, and then came the afore-mentioned school interval. Her bright little sketch of a maidservant in *The New Boy* first brought her into prominence, and showed what might be expected of her. At present she is playing one of the charming daughters who cause so much embarrassment to *A Mother of Three*.



# At the Play.

IN LONDON.

THE theatrical calendar of the past month is remarkable neither for the quantity nor the quality of its productions. The only piece of any importance, dramatically considered, is Mr. Henry Arthur Jones's new play, bearing the admirable title *The Rogue's Comedy*.

## THE ROGUE'S COMEDY.

A Play, in Three Acts, by HENRY ARTHUR JONES. Produced at the Garrick Theatre, April 21.

Mr. Bailey Prothero	Mr. WILLARD.	Mrs. Sydenham ..	Mrs. H. CANE.
Miss Jenison ..	Miss OLLIFFE.	Mr. Reffell ..	Mr. A. B. TAPPING.
Mr. Lambert ..	Mr. W. T. LOVELL.	Mrs. Reffell ..	Miss KEITH WAKEMAN.
Sir William Clara-		Miss Proye ..	Miss ELLEN MEYRICK.
but ..	Mr. CECIL CROFTON.	Mr. Hubbock ..	Mr. GEORGE WILLOUGHBY.
Lady Clara but ..	Lady MONCKTON.	Mr. Chester ..	Mr. WEBBER.
Nina Clara but ..	Miss CORA POOLE.	Mr. Pinniger ..	Mr. W. LEVY.
Lady Dovergreen ..	Miss ROBERTA ERSKINE.	Mr. Robert Cush-	
Sir Thomas Dover-		ing ..	Mr. HERBERT STANDINO.
green ..	Mr. SYDNEY BROUGH.	Palmer ..	Mr. HAMILTON KNIGHT.
Lord John Bucklow	Mr. DAVID JAMES.	First Footman ..	Mr. ALBERT SIMS.
The Marquis of		Second Footman ..	Mr. L. WENMAN.
Bicester ..	Mr. GEORGE CANNINOE.	Servant at Lady	
Mr. Sydenham ..	Mr. J. R. CRAWFORD.	Dovergreen's ..	Mr. G. JAMES.

So far as plot is concerned, Mr. Jones's new play runs upon singularly simple lines. The story can, indeed, be related in a few lines. In it the career is sketched of a certain Mr. Bailey Prothero, a *chevalier d'industrie*, whose acquaintance the audience first makes as a supposed clairvoyant, the idol of a limited circle of fashionable noodles to whose credulity there would appear to be no bounds. Luck, combined with some measure of native shrewdness, enables him to plant his feet firmly on the foreshore of success, and speedily to abandon his original and somewhat risky profession for that of a city financier and company promoter. For a time fortune smiles upon all his efforts; everything he touches turns to gold, and belief in his wonderful powers of perspicacity becomes more and more general. But suddenly, although precisely by what means the author is at no pains to indicate, the tide turns, and the unsubstantial fabric fades away as rapidly as it came. Mainly instrumental in precipitating this *dénouement* is a young man named Lambert, Prothero's own son, although the relationship has never been acknowledged and remains a secret to the end. The irony of fate decrees, however, that the father's humiliation and degradation shall be accomplished by the solitary being in the world whose respect he is eager to win and to hold, as it is one of the main purposes of his life to ensure his happiness. Herein lie the elements of a fine tragedy, the borders of which are only touched by the author.

From this it will be seen that *The Rogue's Comedy* is in no

sense a play of intrigue, but rather a study of character, and practically of one character alone. Remove Mr. Bailey Prothero, and little or nothing remains. In this circumstance can be discerned the strength—or the weakness—of the new play. For ourselves, we are disposed to account it a feature of strength, inasmuch as the part suits Mr. Willard admirably. It is, indeed, long since this fine actor has been afforded so rare an opportunity for the display of his abilities. Bailey Prothero is, in truth, no ordinary or conventional scoundrel, although on his first presentation one is almost tempted to fear that such may prove to be the case. But any impression of the kind is speedily dissipated as the play progresses, and it is recognised with what consummate cleverness Mr. Jones has contrived to develop, bit by bit and trait by trait, a character full of complex issues. Even in his worst moments Prothero never forgets the woman who has been his faithful accomplice throughout life, and whose admiration for the specious humbug one can hardly refrain from sharing. Nor is his affection for the son, who, he knows, openly despises and contemns him, less touching. As a splendid contrast to the innate humanity of the man, is his hardly-concealed scorn of the pitiful set of dupes who have given him their confidence, while it is impossible not to admire his indomitable courage in defeat and his Micawber-like belief in his own powers. These things render the character a peculiarly fascinating one, and if the piece can hardly be described as a *chef d'œuvre*, there need be no hesitation in predicting for it a prosperous career while Mr. Willard is to the front to give his remarkable rendering of the principal part. Of the remainder of the cast there is little to be said except that its members are thoroughly competent to undertake the work assigned them—a task, be it said, of no great difficulty. Miss Olliffe, although a trifle unequal, displayed decided promise as the trusting wife, while Mr. W. T. Lovell showed commendable earnestness in the part of Prothero's son. Excellent sketches of respectively a comic scoundrel in reduced circumstances and of a shrewd society woman were also provided by Mr. Herbert Standing and Lady Monckton.

### THE STAR OF INDIA.

An Original Drama, in Five Acts, by GEORGE R. SIMS and ARTHUR SHIRLEY. Produced at the Princess's Theatre, April 4.

Sir Roland Stan-		Dan Williams ..	Mr. GEORGE YATES.
more .. ..	Mr. LYSTON LYLE.	Subadar Hira Singh	Mr. GERALD MORLEY.
Captain Stanmore	Mr. CLIFTON ALDERSON.	Supt. Willoughby	Mr. CHARLES FRANKMORE.
Mark Stanmore ..	Mr. GEORGE YOUNG.	Captain Fordyce ..	Mr. GREY.
Dick Hatfield ..	Mr. WALTER BEAUMONT.	Major Wallace ..	Mr. LYSTER.
Lieut. Dollamore	Mr. SIDNEY HOWARD.	Kate Armiger ..	Miss HETTIE CHATTELL.
Mr. Wentworth ..	Mr. A. E. MATTHEWS.	Mrs. Wentworth ..	Miss KATE TYNDALL.
Corporal O'Sulli-		Dora Wilton ..	Miss NELLY GREGORY.
van .. ..	Mr. CHARLES H. KENNEY.	Oriana .. ..	Miss SYDNEY FAIRBROTHER.
Aleem Khan ..	Mr. ROBERT PATEMAN.	Clarry Beamish ..	Miss HELEN FARRINGTON.

Arthur Hopkins .. Mr. J. T. MACMILLAN.  
 Vernon Hopkins.. Mr. FRANK WYATT.  
 Tom Tully.. .. Mr. F. COLSON.  
 Jim Green.. .. Mr. H. WADE.

Mrs. Beamish .. Mrs. HARRIETT CLIFTON.  
 Mrs. Musters .. Miss HELEN VICARY.  
 Maraquita.. .. Miss AGNES HEWITT.

To insist that the strict laws of probability shall be respected by every writer of melodrama would, of course, be absurd, but at least one may ask of him that he shall pay some little attention to the careful joining of his flats. Mr. Sims and Mr. Shirley are no novices at the game; in collaboration or alone they have contrived to cover a large area of the melodramatic field. But practice, in place of bringing perfection, would only appear in their case to have provoked indifference; for their latest effort, *The Star of India*, so far as literary or constructive qualities are concerned, is as feeble a piece of work as one could wish to see, or not to see. The plot, besides containing an unusual number of inconsistencies, drifts about from place to place and from character to character, "to one thing constant never," in the most irritating fashion. The success of the piece is, however, established by a series of vivid scenes representing life at the British Residency, Manipur—a night attack made by natives upon it—an incident recalling the heroic conduct of Mrs. Grimwood in similar circumstances—and a subsequent skirmish in the jungle. An additional factor, largely responsible for the prosperity of the drama, is the introduction of an extraordinarily quaint little maid-of-all-work, whose cockney humours at once betray the master-hand of Mr. Sims, *facile princeps* in the portrayal of such characters. Happily he has found in Miss Sydney Fairbrother an actress exceptionally gifted with the ability to give expression to his ideas, the net result being a performance of indescribable drollery. Miss Fairbrother's Oriana is a study full of cleverness and intelligence, and stamps her as a *comédienne* of wonderful resource in this particular direction. To her deservedly fell the success of the evening.

The story set forth in *The Star of India* deals with the machinations of an impostor who endeavours to pass himself off as the son, by an early marriage, of Sir Roland Stanmore, with the view of ousting his half-brother, Mark Stanmore, from his position as heir to the estates. Mark himself, who has just returned home after a long sojourn in India, is in love with Kate Armiger, although unaware that during his absence she has, in order to save her father from ruin, married a rascal named Dick Hatfield. As Dick, however, was arrested immediately after the ceremony on a criminal charge and despatched abroad at his country's expense, the episode has been allowed to drop into oblivion. Eventually he returns, or rather a scoundrel impersonating him returns, to claim his bride. Fortunately Captain Stanmore has an old grudge against Dick, and at his instigation Aleem Khan, an Indian servant, stabs the new comer with a



knife which possesses the invaluable property of dropping poison whenever it comes into contact with any substance. Naturally Kate Armiger is accused of the crime, but a good-natured coroner's jury gives her the benefit of the doubt, and she is released. What all this has to do with Manipur the reader will doubtless be puzzled to understand and we frankly confess we are unable to explain. But thither the authors carry us in the following act, apparently to show how a Christmas pudding may be concocted beneath a blazing sun, and to fill our eyes and nostrils with smoke from exploding bombs. Nevertheless, the pictures painted are all very fine and large, and well calculated to produce the desired effect upon an excitable audience. In the last act characters and spectators trip merrily back to England, where melodramatic justice is meted out to all and sundry. Of Miss Fairbrother's performance we have already spoken, and apart from that, reference need only be made to Mr. Robert Pateman's powerful acting as Aleem Khan, the pleasing grace of Miss Hettie Chattell's manner, and the robust and effective style of Miss Agnes Hewitt as a jealous Mexican girl.

### THE SIN OF ST. HULDA.

A Romantic Drama, in Four Acts, by G. STUART OGILVIE. Produced at the Shaftesbury Theatre, April 9.

Otho.. ..	Mr. CHARLES CARTWRIGHT.	Hugo .. ..	Mr. A. CHENERY.
Henric .. ..	Mr. LEWIS WALLER.	A Herald .. ..	Mr. FRANK MORLEY.
John Knipperdoll- ing .. ..	Mr. HENRY KEMBLE.	An Officer .. ..	Mr. JAMES SPILLER.
Manteuffel .. ..	Mr. KENNETH BLACK.	Maximilian .. ..	Mr. FRANK THORNTON.
Count Ulic .. ..	Mr. GEORGE HIPPLESLEY.	Dame Friederike .. ..	Miss ANNIE WEBSTER.
Joachim .. ..	Mr. EDMUND COVINGTON.	Liese .. ..	Miss HELENA DACRE.
Hermann .. ..	Mr. CHARLES GOODHART.	Marte .. ..	Miss E. BRINSLEY SHERIDAN.
Ernst .. ..	Mr. FRANK McDONNELL.	Elisabeth .. ..	Mrs. ARTHUR AYERS.
Wilhelm .. ..	Mr. A. ANDERSON.	Hedwig .. ..	Miss MARIE LYONS.
Konrad .. ..	Mr. LESLY THOMSON.	Ann .. ..	Miss LILLIAN BRENNARD.
Nikolaus .. ..	Mr. H. DEANE.	Elsa .. ..	Miss ANNIE BURTON.
Franz .. ..	Mr. HENRY NELSON.	Maria .. ..	Miss LEONIE NORBURY.
Stortebecker .. ..	Mr. GILBERT TRENT.	Gretchen .. ..	Miss RACHEL.
Tipstaff .. ..	Mr. HENRY.	Doris .. ..	Miss DOROTHY HARWOOD.
		St. Hulda .. ..	Miss KATE BORKE.

The troublous times following upon the death of Luther have furnished Mr. Stuart Ogilvie with a background for the picture he presents in his new drama, *The Sin of St. Hulda*. Such being the case, it is natural that the element of theological controversy should find a considerable place in his play. Mr. Ogilvie, however, has been sufficiently wise not to insist too strenuously upon polemical questions, but rather to rely for success upon the interest of a fairly exciting love story. From whatever standpoint it be regarded, whether as a piece of dramatic construction or of literary execution, the play deserves at least as much praise as may be given to anything in the nature of sincere and honest endeavour. The author has aimed high, and if it cannot be said that he has quite succeeded in hitting the mark, he issues at any rate from the contest with credit. To claim for the drama originality of theme or of workmanship would be absurd. The

plot in one form or another has done service again and again, while the influence of many previous writers can be traced in the dialogue. Nevertheless, the work as a whole bears the imprint of a scholarly and refined mind, although, in striving to obtain new effects, Mr. Ogilvie has only too frequently been tempted into the commission of the most glaring solecisms. The supposed necessity of supplying comic relief has also produced disastrous results, for evidently humour is not the author's strong point. Of the four acts contained in the play, the third is unquestionably the best and strongest; indeed, it is the only one which really obtains a firm hold upon the audience. The others are more or less leather and prunella, necessary, no doubt, to the due development of the story, but lacking the essential quality of all dramatic work—sustained interest.

Saint Hulda is the honourable title conferred upon Katchen, a country girl, by reason of her religious fervour and devotion to the Lutheran cause. In early girlhood, Katchen, however, had been anything but a saint, having readily yielded to the love protestations of one Siegbert, in reality Prince Otho of Halberstadt, a determined foe of all Protestants. Converted by Luther, Hulda is accepted as a leader of the new movement, the growing success of which is greatly due to her efforts. Meanwhile, Heinric, Baron of Mindenburg, meets and becomes enamoured of her, the result being that he too gladly embraces the good cause. Furious at losing so powerful an ally, Otho angrily declares to Hulda that, unless she promises to abandon Heinric and send him back to his old allegiance, he himself will openly announce the fact that Saint Hulda is no other than his old mistress, Katchen. Hulda, however, while refusing to urge her lover to forsake his faith, exclaims that she herself will reveal the truth not only to him, but to the assembled townsfolk in the marketplace. But, as she is hurrying off to fulfil her object, a letter is placed in her hands, stating that a crisis has been reached, and that everything must be done to keep the people of Mindenburg constant to their purpose. To confess her shame now would obviously be to imperil the safety of the cause. So when Prince Otho utters his accusation, Hulda hurls it defiantly back at him, to the relief and joy of Heinric and the excited spectators. But the danger over, she can no longer be silent, although conscious that confession must alienate from her the sympathies of her companions and possibly of her lover, Heinric. This is exactly what happens, and, overcome by the shock, Hulda falls dead. Heinric, struck by remorse, is on the point of taking his own life, when, through a transparency—a cheap and wholly unnecessary device—Saint Hulda is revealed repeating one of her most notable discourses. The circumstance restores Heinric to his senses, and he at once

abandons his fatal purpose. To the general performance, as to the superb mounting of the play, great praise can be given. Miss Kate Rorke's Saint Hulda is a beautiful and exquisitely pathetic creation, charged also with an emotional power of no mean order. Mr. Lewis Waller has seldom done anything finer than his manly, earnest, and forcible performance of Heinric, while Mr. Charles Cartwright's singularly effective and finished study of Prince Otho only suffered from a slight tendency towards monotony. Admirable also in all respects was the Dame Friederike of Miss Annie Webster.

### A MOTHER OF THREE.

An Original Farce, in Three Acts, by CLO GRAVES. Produced at the Comedy Theatre, April 8.

Professor Murgatroyd	Mr. FELIX MORRIS.	Amelia	..	..	Miss MACKENZIE.
Sir Wellington Port, K.C.B.,	Mr. CYRIL MAUDE.	Soza	..	..	Miss ANNIE GOWARD.
Napier Outram Port..	Mr. STUART CHAMPION.	Cassiopeia	..	..	Miss ESMÉ BERINGER.
Captain Tuckle	.. Mr. CLARENCE BLAKISTON.	Vesta	..	..	Miss LILY JOHNSON.
Cheveley Thrupp	.. Mr. COSMO STUART.	Aquila	..	..	Miss AUDREY FORD.
Lady Port	.. Miss ROSE LECLERCQ.	Mrs. Murgatroyd	..	..	Miss FANNY BROUGH.

In *A Mother of Three*, Miss Clo Graves has written a farce which is at once bright, clever, and inspiring. Nor is it likely that an irresponsible public will regard the fact as detrimental to their enjoyment that some of the allusions contained in the piece are decidedly of the risky order. If one were disposed to make a complaint, it would be that the ingenious authoress has put too many of her good things into the first act, a proceeding from which the two later are bound, by comparison, to suffer somewhat. This is particularly noticeable in the case of the second, in which the fun shows a decided tendency to flag; but doubtless when the players have grown more accustomed to their parts this impression will wear off. Miss Graves has taken as the main idea of her piece the return home, after an eighteen years' absence, of a scatter-brained Professor, who, to his consternation, finds that he is the accredited father of three bouncing girls, instead of the one whose arrival had been duly announced to him. Meanwhile his wife, ignorant of her husband's reappearance, has donned masculine attire, with the view of silencing Dame Rumour, who not unnaturally begins to show herself somewhat sceptical respecting the existence of a gentleman who insists upon concealing himself in so distant and almost problematical a country as Peru. Professor Murgatroyd's horror may, on the other hand, be imagined on discovering a strange man firmly established in his place, and figuring as the father of his family. That the situation is one from which—granting a certain good-natured spirit of make-believe—the most diverting complications may arise will readily be understood. *A Mother of Three* is, of course, pure farce, full of the most astounding improbabilities and inconsistencies, and standing wholly outside the limits of serious criticism. Its sole object is



to create laughter, and in this respect it is entirely successful. Although obviously exceedingly nervous, Miss Fanny Brough carried the weight of the principal part on her shoulders without flinching, playing with unflagging vigour and dash. As the Professor, Mr. Felix Morris proved a trifle disappointing after his superb performance in *On 'Change*. Time, however, may be trusted speedily to remedy any shortcomings observable on the first night. Mr. Cyril Maude gave an extremely amusing and carefully-studied sketch of an irritable officer, and Miss Annie Goward an inimitable portrait of an illiterate servant with a cold in her head. Nor would it be easy to find a brighter, merrier, or more natural trio of pretty girls than Misses Esmé Beringer, Lily Johnson, and Audrey Ford. The favourable reception given to the piece stamped it as an instantaneous success.

### BIARRITZ.

A Musical Farce, in Two Acts. Words by JEROME K. JEROME and ADRIAN ROSS. Music by F. OSMOND CARR. Produced at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, April 11.

John J. Jenkins ..	Mr. ARTHUR ROBERTS.	Niagara G. Wackett	Miss SADIE JEROME.
Johannes .. ..	Mr. FRED KAYE.	Enriqueta .. ..	Miss ELLAS DEE.
General Tomassino	Mr. ERIC THORNE.	Babette .. ..	Miss PIERRETTE AMELLA.
Rodney Kemp ..	Mr. ROLAND CUNNINGHAM	Duchess of Melton	
Duke of Melton Mowbray	Mr. A. NEWARK.	Mowbray .. ..	Miss HARRIE DOREEN.
Dr. Arlistreete ..	Mr. L. F. CHAPUY.	Mrs. Carew .. ..	Miss ADELAIDE NEWTON.
Honorable Johnnie	Mr. HAROLD EDEN.	Florance .. ..	Miss EVA ELLERSLIE.
Gendarme .. ..	Mr. WALKER MARNOCK	Jane .. ..	Miss JULIA KENT.
Tessie Carew ..	Miss PHYLLIS BROUGHTON	Elizabeth .. ..	Miss CARRIE BENTON.
Mr. Charley Bargus	Miss MILLIE HYLTON.	Janet .. ..	Miss KITTIE LOFTUS.

Prolonged experience has taught the habitual playgoer only too surely that he who builds lofty expectations upon any piece described as a musical farce is tolerably certain to be disappointed. Yet, however humble and lowly were the hopes formed regarding *Biarritz*, even they must have suffered disillusionment, for a more chaotic and incoherent farce has seldom been seen upon the London stage. This is the more to be regretted, because the authors start with a fairly promising notion. But either their ingenuity was exhausted by the unwonted exertion of establishing the basis of a plot, or their knowledge of stage requirements proved too limited to enable them to give form and substance to their original idea. The first act of *Biarritz*, if far from being a masterpiece, might, despite its *longueurs* and occasional ineptitudes, be allowed to pass. Concerning the second, it is best perhaps to preserve a discreet silence. Yet, so inexhaustible are the resources of Mr. Arthur Roberts, it is quite within the bounds of possibility that he may still contrive to change a lugubrious farce into a merry entertainment. Such miracles he has achieved before this, and with him at the helm there is still hope that the derelict vessel *Biarritz* may safely reach the haven of success. If so desirable a result be attained, the entire credit will have to be placed to his account, however, and not to that of the authors.

The story starts with the arrival of Mr. John J. Jenkins in

Biarritz, at the Hotel du Palais, of which Mr. Jenkins, sen., is proprietor. The manager, Mons. Vidal, has, it appears, recently absconded, and in his absence the reins of management have fallen into the hands of the head waiter, Johannes, who is aided and abetted by Janet, an unscrupulous little person holding the position of cashier. Jenkins at once determines to accept the post relinquished by Vidal, while Johannes and Janet endeavour by their misleading counsel so to make him bring the place into discredit that eventually it may revert to them for a nominal sum. Jenkins's eyes, however, are speedily opened to their treachery by a friend named Rodney Kemp, a young fellow who has run away with the daughter of General Tomassino, a diamond king, and, by a singular coincidence, an inmate of the hotel, although under an assumed name. Anxious to assist the young people, Jenkins disguises himself as the General, and in that capacity is invited to a fête champêtre, organised by the Mayor of Biarritz. What takes place there is more or less guesswork, and it must suffice to say that, after the usual series of songs, dances, changes of costume and choruses, the curtain is summarily rung down upon the reconciliation of all concerned. In connection with so flimsy and feeble a piece detailed criticism would obviously be wasted. Upon Mr. Osmond Carr's music, although as a whole the score lacks breadth and colour, a more favourable judgment may be pronounced; while Mr. Adrian Ross's lyrics, if hardly up to his usual level, serve their purpose sufficiently well. Of Mr. Arthur Roberts's Mr. Jenkins it would be premature to speak at present. A month hence it will probably be an entirely different and doubtless thoroughly characteristic performance. Fairly competent as the remaining numbers of the cast proved, scarcely any of these showed such super-excellence as to call for special mention.

### THE GAY PARISIENNE.

An Original Musical Comedy, in Two Acts, written by GEORGE DANCE, and composed by IVAN CARYLL. Produced at the Duke of York's Theatre, April 4.

Mr. Ebenezer Honeycomb	Mr. LIONEL RIGNOLD.	Amos Dingle ..	.. Mr. HUBERT WILLIS.
Mrs. Honeycomb ..	.. Miss LILLIE BELMORE.	Tom Everleigh ..	.. Mr. EDGAR STEVENS.
Nora .. ..	.. Miss VIOLET ROBINSON.	Algernon P. Ducie ..	.. Mr. JAS. FRANCIS.
Mabel .. ..	.. Miss MARION DOLBY.	Percy Tooting ..	.. Mr. C. GULDFORD.
Major Fosdyke ..	.. Mr. W. H. DENNY.	Cecil Smyth ..	.. Mr. P. LESLIE.
Angela .. ..	.. Miss VIOLET ELLICOTT.	Hans .. ..	.. Mr. HARRY KILBURN.
May .. ..	.. Miss EDITH STUART.	Gretchen ..	.. Miss HARRIET WOOD.
Ethel .. ..	.. Miss E. CARLTON.	Anna .. ..	.. Miss EDITH MILTON.
Gladys .. ..	.. Miss EDITH BARTLETT.	Fritz .. ..	.. Mr. GARTH.
Maud .. ..	.. Miss EDITH MADA.	Ruth .. ..	.. Miss LOUIE FREEAR.
Edith .. ..	.. Miss ROSE MONTGOMERY.	Blatterwatter ..	.. Mr. AKERMAN MAY.
Violet .. ..	.. Miss IVY HERTZOG.	M. Auguste Pompier	Mr. FRANK WHEELER.
Rose .. ..	.. Miss MAUD HOPPE.	Mdlle. Julie Bon-Bon	Miss ADA REEVE.

So thoroughly on the same lines are the musical comedies of the day, that it is all but impossible to differentiate between them. In almost every instance one formula is observed which has, at any rate, the merit of simplicity. The author has merely to imagine or to borrow—the terms are well-nigh synonymous—

the bare outline of a story sufficient, with the aid of a number of variety "turns," to carry him to the end of the first act. In the second confusion becomes worse confounded, and, abandoning all pretence to a plot, he leaves the rest to Providence and the efforts of the performers. *The Gay Parisienne* conforms with tolerable closeness to the accustomed rule, although, at the outset, it offers something more than ordinary promise so far as a connected story is concerned. What there is of this deals with the endeavour of Julie Bon-Bon and Auguste Pompier, a couple of adventurers, to blackmail a certain Ebenezer Honeycomb on the grounds that he had made an offer of marriage to the first-named. Eventually Honeycomb is found guilty, by an unsympathetic jury, of trifling with the lady's affections, and cast in heavy damages. To avoid payment of these he absconds, and in the second act is discovered at a German spa disguised as a Scotchman. At this point the plot is practically submerged beneath a wave of episodic detail, and only rescued in time for the curtain to be rung down upon a conclusion satisfactory to all concerned. Among the performers, the success of the evening fell to Miss Louie Freear, who, by her odd appearance, extraordinary voice, and curious movements, literally took the house by storm. Miss Ada Reeve, in the title part, acted and sang with the greatest archness and piquancy; while Mr. Frank Wheeler, as Pompier, caused continuous merriment by his clever performance. Both Mr. Lionel Rignold and Mr. W. H. Denny have been seen to greater advantage than in the characters assigned them, but a comparatively new comer, Mr. Edgar Stevens, created a favourable impression by his pleasant singing and refined style. Mr. Dance's libretto can hardly be said to scintillate with wit, nor do his lyrics rise above the level of the commonplace. Mr. Ivan Caryll, on the other hand, has provided some melodious and graceful music, although even he, it must be confessed, has been inspired to better purpose on previous occasions. Pretty costumes, effective grouping, and an abundance of colour and of light serve, however, to make the production what it unquestionably is—a decisive success.

### TRUE BLUE; OR, AFLOAT AND ASHORE.

An Original Drama of the Royal Navy, in Five Acts, by LEONARD OUTRAM and STUART GORDON,  
Lieut. R.N. Produced at the Olympic Theatre, March 19.

Captain Drake, R.N. . .	Mr. J. F. CORNISH.	The Governor of Gibraltar . . .	Mr. H. R. TEESDALE.
Lieut. Guy Maitland, R.N. . .	Mr. ALFRED BUCKLAW.	The Governor of Algiers . . .	Mr. F. A. LANE.
Lieut. Mark Strachan, R.N. . .	Mr. WILLIAM RIGNOLD.	Sir George Majoribanks . . .	Mr. FREDERIC DE LARA.
Lieut. Jones, R.N. . .	Mr. ALBERT E. RAYNOR.	Spero Xicluna . . .	Mr. EDWARD O'NEILL.
Sub-Lieut. Algernon Skewes, R.N. . .	Mr. J. A. BENTHAM.	Carlota Malrayo . . .	Mrs. RALEIGH.
Midshipman Sprightly . .	Miss MARION HUNTLEY.	Alice Majoribanks . . .	Miss LAURA GRAVES.
John Lobbett, A.B. . .	Mr. CHARLES WIDROW.	Daphne Bower . . .	Miss MARY BATES.
		Rose Pringle . . .	Miss KATE PHILLIPS.

*True Blue* is chiefly remarkable for the interesting series of pictures it provides, illustrative of life on board a modern man-



of-war. That these are, in every instance, absolutely true to life, not even the presence of Lieutenant Gordon's name on the programme will induce us to believe. Personally we have some little experience of bull-fights in Spain, and we can vouch for it that the irregularities witnessed in that depicted in the first act of *True Blue* would never be permitted in any public *corrida*. Wherefore we are disposed to be just a trifle sceptical in regard to some of the incidents that take place on board H.M.S. *Watteau*, which, it has been explained, is the authors' humorous way of spelling "What-ho!" Correct or not, we can honestly praise the various *tableaux* for their picturesqueness, colour, and general effectiveness. Jack, afloat or ashore, is almost as interesting a figure as his famous rival, Tommy Atkins, while to many he is a much more genial and amusing fellow. In their new drama the authors have made quite the most of him, and so we have Jack receiving visitors on the quarter-deck, off Gibraltar, with the usual accompaniments of dancing, flirting, and paying outrageous compliments; Jack on duty, hard at work getting the anchor up; Jack in the stoke hold, piling fuel on the fires and rescuing stowaway girls from their hiding-place in the empty boiler; Jack indulging in half-holiday revels; and Jack relegated to the ship's "deepest dungeon" as a punishment for appearing drunk on duty. All this provides an excellent evening's entertainment, and for those interested in naval manœuvres possesses a real and irresistible fascination. To such it almost appears in the nature of a misfortune that the authors have deemed it necessary to invent a story upon which to string together their various scenes. Story there is, however, of so preposterous a nature that there need be no fear of anyone taking it seriously. To attempt to relate it here, even in the briefest form, would require an amount of space altogether disproportionate to its importance. Enough that it simply palpitates with thrilling incidents which, if by no means novel, afford at any rate opportunity for some exceedingly striking scenic effects. Of the numerous company engaged, Mr. William Rignold, Mr. Alfred Bucklaw, Mr. Charles Wibrow, Mrs. Raleigh, Miss Laura Graves, and Miss Kate Phillips made the most pronounced acting successes.

#### MONSIEUR DE PARIS.

A Play, in One Act, by ALICIA RAMSEY and RUDOLPH DE CORDOVA. Produced at the Royalty Theatre, April 16.

Georges Delpit ..	Mr. MARK KINGHORNE.	Mère Lisette ..	.. Mrs. HENRY LEIGH.
Henri Le Febvre ..	Mr. HENRY VIBART.	Jacinta ..	.. Miss VIOLET VANBRUGH.

How far the stage is served by the production of a piece like *Monsieur de Paris* is more or less a question of individual taste, but for ourselves we confess to having no fancy for the presentation of the purely horrible at the theatre. Mr. Arthur Bouchier is appa-

rently of a different way of thinking, and if he can find a sufficient number of the public willing to endorse his views, we have, our protest duly recorded, nothing more to say on the subject. Although a crude piece of workmanship, *Monsieur de Paris* contains elements of strength, with which are associated certain details that are simply revolting. The heroine, Jacinta, is the daughter of Georges Delpit, public executioner of France, and has fallen in love with a young farmer, Henri Le Febvre, who, however, has been left in ignorance of the nature of her father's employment. On learning the truth, he indignantly refuses to fulfil his promise, and is in consequence stabbed to death by Jacinta, who, thereafter, holds up the knife, dripping with blood, to the view of the astonished audience. If this be art, we shall expect speedily to see the dissecting rooms at our hospitals thrown open for the delectation of the public. In the judgment of all healthy-minded people, such exhibitions are merely disgusting. As Jacinta, Miss Violet Vanbrugh revealed a certain amount of undisciplined force, which, however, requires training before it can be pronounced convincing. Mr. Henry Vibart's performance was appallingly vigorous, while Mr. Mark Kinghorne and Mrs. Henry Leigh supplied two effective little sketches.

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#### IN THE PROVINCES.

If the three-act comedy of Mr. Hamilton Aïde's produced by Mr. and Mrs. Kendal on April 9th, at the Theatre Royal, Brighton, has not lowered the reputation of author or players, it has not greatly increased it. *Lord and Lady Guilderooy* cannot be described as a good play. Were the two chief parts taken by others, it would prove very tiresome. Throughout the whole of the first two acts the audience was made to feel that "something was coming." In the third act it came; and what was it? Merely an accusation by a jealous boor of a husband against his wife for tampering with his letters, indefinitely imputing to her a bad motive. As a matter of fact, Lady Guilderooy fears that dynamite is enclosed in letters to her husband, and takes the precaution of dipping them in water before they come into his hands. To render this striking consummation the more probable, Lord Guilderooy is made an Irish absentee landlord, and much is heard in the first two acts about agrarian distress and of riotous proceedings on the part of tenants. For no very patent reason, husband and wife have drifted apart, but the dynamite incident reunites them. Two little love stories are skilfully interworked into the main plot of the story. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Kendal has a worthy opportunity for the display of their best powers, but they infuse life and probability into two very stagey figures. Mr.

Norman Forbes as a young lover, and Mr. William Lugg in a character part, were admirable.

*A Night in Paris*, an adaptation of *L'Hôtel du Libre Echange*, by MM. Feydeau and Desvallières, was produced at the Theatre Royal, Newcastle, on April 13th. Under the title of *The Gay Parisians* the play had a successful run last autumn at Hoyt's Theatre, New York. The Gallic origin of the farce is obvious in every situation. After many difficulties a husband succeeds in quitting the matrimonial roof after nightfall. He takes a married lady to a restaurant to get some supper, and there she almost falls into the arms of her own husband, who is engaged in a similar adventure. The restaurant, or rather hotel, boasts possession of a haunted room, and there the first husband is confronted by "spectres" in the shape of four pretty girls in their nightdresses. The fun never for an instant flags, for the sufficient reason that the characters of the husbands are in the hands of Mr. George Giddens and Mr. Charles Sugden. The play should prove very successful when taken to the Vaudeville Theatre.

On the same day, *The Wand of Wedlock*, a new play by Mrs. Lancaster Wallis and Mr. Herbert Macpherson, was produced at the Grand Theatre, Cardiff. As a sexual problem play, it has come rather too late to be successful. In addition to its literary merit, it is well constructed, and Mrs. Wallis, in the central part of a loving and too-trusting woman, carries the audience away. Mrs. Wallis fully rises to a very difficult scene, in which she is acting as nurse to the children of the man who should have been her husband. She obtained efficient support, notably from Mr. Charles Weir and from Mr. Webster Lawson.

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#### IN PARIS.

*Disparu* at the Gymnase, by MM. Bisson and Sylvane, is a farcical comedy, in which an artist, having disappeared from his habitation without leaving his address, is supposed to have died in some mysterious manner. His relatives take possession of his house and effects, and he turns up at the critical moment, and sends the house into fits of laughter by waking and terrifying a process-server (Mussier), who represents the "succession," out of his slumbers with a Tonkinese gong and improvised Chinese apparitions. It is the fashion now to put a bed on the stage; so the bed is there, and the process-server gets into it. Then there is a joke about Egypt, for the purposes of which an Englishman is introduced as tenant, to whom the house has been let by the supposed heir. Having paid beforehand, he insists on possession, which seems natural enough. The hero observes, "Those English think they are in Egypt wherever they go," the author apparently thinking they are right to stay; but the joke falls flat. The scene



of the bed and the process-server, played by Dailly, is extremely comical, as anybody who knows that actor will understand.

*La Meute* at the Renaissance, by M. Abel Hermant, has given rise to a duel between the author and the Prince de Sagan, which would be enough to make a piece. However, it is good enough without such an excellent stimulus to public curiosity, though, as we believe, this is the first dramatic work of the well-known novelist responsible for it. At the Français, it will be remembered, *Grosse Fortune* dealt with the effects of the inheritance of great riches on a weak man. The theme of *La Meute* is in the same order of ideas, both having possibly been suggested by recent scandals in Paris. The main figure in *La Meute*, however, is not the millionaire, but his friend, his chief parasite, a penniless man of good family, who lives by directing the expenditure of the rich man's fortune. This friend is a very deliberate scamp, who has seduced the rich man's sister while still a girl, the better to secure his own ends. She has married somebody else, from whom she is separated. Eventually the parasite determines on marriage with a rich American girl, who really falls in love with him, and by whose love he becomes purified. His mistress is meanwhile divorced, and becomes free to marry her lover. He, meanwhile, has to deal with other rascals, among them his father, who wants to share the spoil. To get the necessary money he prevails on the millionaire to invest in some bogus patents; the law lays hold of him, and ultimately there is only one issue from the dilemma for a man who comes to see the error of his ways. Some say that suicide is not a likely consummation where the antecedents are so cynically corrupt, but this is a matter of opinion, and we rather think the author is not out of his bearings.

*Le Grand Galeoto*, at the Théâtre des Poètes, one of the independent theatrical companies, was a revelation to some playgoers, to whom the name of Echegaray was only known as that of a prolific Spanish dramatist of the new school. The translation into prose by M. J. Lemaire and J. Schurmann is well executed. Of course a prose rendering brings out the crudeness of some of the situations. In the original they are covered by verse which almost requires antique methods. It was well played, and much applauded by the select playgoers who are interested in foreign masterpieces.

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#### IN BERLIN.

A four-act drama, by Paul Langenscheidt, entitled *Halder und Sohn*, has seen the light at the Schiller Theatre. It is built upon the familiar lines of the Volk piece, that description of play which, like our Adelphi melodrama, never fails of its effect on

the public. All the characters are good old acquaintances, and the subject matter we have very often met with in various disguises. Yet Herr Langenscheidt is not without considerable talent, although that talent is for comic rather than for serious dramatic situations. In the field of farce he might be a dangerous competitor for Blumenthal, Kadelburg, Schönthau, and others, but he would first have to get rid of a tendency to pessimism which is rather unpleasing.

At the National Theatre, *Glücksdiel*, by Herr Karl Schneidt, is an amusing piece, but, perhaps, not quite in the sense in which the author intended it to be so. Herr Schneidt had the happy idea to disarm criticism by publishing a lively essay on "the right to fail." He promised to hiss louder than anyone if the public thought he should be hissed. When he was called before the curtain, after the third act, by a house which clamoured for the author, he appeared to have some little doubt as to the extent to which his summons was intended as a flattering one; he bowed, the audience burst into the most uncontrollable laughter, and the poor author remained standing on the stage for a moment or two in anything but a happy frame of mind. In his essay he stated that his best friends had counselled him not to produce the play. They were good and true friends, for not even a friendly brother critic could say that this was a play to take seriously. The plot is curious. Senator Rudolf and his wife, Albertine, have a son of great promise; they have both, in addition, a past. Edgar is Albertine's son, but not Rudolf's; he is the son of his uncle Rudolf's brother. We learn this awful secret accidentally, when Albertine reveals it to her mother-in-law. The latter does not worry herself about such a trifle, apparently because her grandmotherly relation to Edgar can in no way be affected by it. Edgar loves Clara, the daughter of Captain Hansen, but Clara is not the daughter of her father, but the daughter of Rudolf, Edgar's reputed father. As they are now informed, by persons insufficiently acquainted with the facts, that they are brother and sister, they must obviously bid each other a long farewell; but there is still much left to be revealed, and possibly those who waited till the end of the play saw Edgar and Clara made happy.

*Das Glück im Winkel*, a drama in three acts, by Hermann Sudermann, has been played at the Lessing theatre. It was not very well received, the opinion of the Berlin public coinciding with that of provincial playgoers in respect to the merits of the piece. Mention must also be made of *Zu Hause*, a one-act piece by Georg Hirschfeld, produced at the Deutsches Theatre. As a study of character it is remarkably clever, especially when the youth of the author is taken into account; but it is an unsavoury piece, describing some of the worst passions to which

men and women are the slaves, and the way in which the happiness of a home may be shipwrecked by the viciousness of one parent and the weakness of the other.

Herr Adolph L'Arronge has published a very interesting book on the German theatre of to-day, under the title of *Deutsches Theater und Deutsche Schauspielkunst* (Berlin, Concordia, deutsche Verlags-Anstalt). He is one of the men best qualified to write on this subject, and all who take an interest in German acting should procure the book and read it.

#### IN VIENNA.

One of the most interesting novelties of the past month has been the new and very impatiently awaited opera by Carl Goldmark, called *Das Heimchen am Herd*. The story of this opera has been freely adapted from Dickens's *Cricket on the Hearth* by A. M. Willner, and it is pleasant to say that the librettist has done his work not only conscientiously, but skilfully and well. The opera itself has met with unqualified success. The overture was warmly applauded, and the enthusiasm of the public increased from scene to scene, from act to act, until, after the *intermezzo* (still another *intermezzo* !) before the last act, the cheering became so tumultuous that that number had to be repeated. After the second and third acts the singers were again and again called before the curtain, and with them the composer, who was finally summoned alone to receive the congratulations of the house. Goldmark has derived his inspiration almost wholly from the book, and has so closely followed the ideas of the librettist that it is difficult to recognise the composer of *The Queen of Sheba* and of *Merlin* in a work whose tunes remind one now of Wagner, now of the modern Italians, now of Volksongs and dances of the olden time. And yet there are inspiration, invention, and individuality in the work, which, if one may judge from present signs, is long likely to continue popular with the opera-goers of this capital.

At the Theater an der Wien, Mlle. Reichenberg has been giving a series of performances in which she has displayed all those fine qualities which won for her at the Théâtre Français the world-wide reputation she now enjoys. Needless to say that the Viennese public were most appreciative, and that the welcome which Mlle. Reichenberg has received at their hands has been all that the most exacting artist could desire.

At the same theatre *Der Wunderknabe* (*The Prodigy*) has been brought out. It is an operetta, the words of which have been written by Alexander Landesberg and Leo Stein, and the music by Eugen von Taund. The leading character in this amusing piece is that of an infant phenomenon, a little girl, the daughter



of the speculative Herr Gordoni, named Paola, who plays the violin most admirably. The child grows in size as she advances in years, and in order not to lose the advantage of her juvenile attractions, her father dresses her in boy's clothes and travels round the world with her, describing her as "the marvellous boy." It so happens that in their journey, when Paola happens to be dressed in the garments proper to her sex, a young count sees her for an instant, and falls in love at first sight. The girl forthwith disappears, to give place to a supposed brother, whom she is represented to be when she is in boy's clothes. From this confusion comes all the imbroglio of the piece; and although both count and artist are eventually made happy by reciprocal affection, it is not until they have passed through sufficient contrary adventures to keep the audience sympathetic and interested to the end. The music is excellent, and many of the airs are both refined and taking in a popular sense.

At the Raimund theatre, a farce called *Fräulein Doctor* (*Miss Doctor*), by Oscar Walther and Leo Stein, has appeared. Not long since the Ministry of Education issued a new regulation on the subject of the studies of women. Certainly the new regulation only relates to medical science, while in the play a young lady is anxious to devote herself to the profession of the Bar, but this does not spoil the topical nature of the allusions for the Viennese. The question of the emancipation of women stands in the forefront of the new piece. *Fräulein Johanna*, who has studied in Zurich, wishes to give herself up to advocacy, while a young lawyer who has fallen in love with her resolves to prevent her from doing so. The pair finally marry, but the question whether women should become barristers and follow scientific pursuits does not meet with any direct solution. Around the main idea of the piece are woven episodes of a more or less amusing description, one of the best of which is the scene where a tender and too indulgent father suddenly shows himself in the character of the stern and unbending parent. The farce was too long spun out, but on the whole was favourably received.

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#### IN ITALY.

The only event of last month which is worthy of particular note in connection with the Italian stage is the production of *Andrea Chenier*, a four-act drama, by Signor L. Illica, with incidental music by Signor U. Giordano, already known as the composer of the opera *Mala Vita*. The new piece came out at the Scala, Milan, and seems to be universally regarded as a great success. The leading incidents of the plot, as may be supposed, are borrowed from episodes of the French Revolution. The first scene is laid at the Comte de Coigny's castle, and when the

curtain rises a number of servants are engaged in putting the finishing touches to the arrangements for a festive gathering to which the Comte has invited a large number of friends. Suddenly Gérard, one of the servants, who, having a taste for reading, has imbibed the revolutionary spirit running through much of the literature of the period, stops the work he has in hand, and seeks to incite his fellow-servants to open revolt and violence against their employer as a member of the hated aristocracy. At that critical moment, Maddalena de Coigny, the Comte's daughter, for whom all the servants entertain deep respect, enters the room, and the preparations for the festivity proceed as though nothing had happened. With the arrival of the company, the hero, Chénier, a poet of the people, is introduced to the audience. A common-place remark of his is made the subject of merriment by Maddalena and her friends, but a dignified reproof from Chénier puts her promptly to shame and extracts from her a humble apology. Just as the apology is uttered, a number of starving men and women clamouring for food gather outside, and Gérard brings their presence more plainly home to the gay assembly by throwing open a window and announcing "His Highness, Want," a piece of impertinence for which he receives prompt dismissal. Between the incidents of the first act and those of the second, a period of five years has elapsed, and the Revolution is at its height, and Gérard and Chénier occupy leading positions in the ranks of the Revolutionists. Both of these men aspire to the hand of Maddalena, and the result of an appointment which she makes with Chénier is a duel in which Gérard is wounded. For an offence, real or imaginary, against the people, Chénier is shortly afterwards arrested. Maddalena is reduced to the necessity of appealing to Gérard to save him, but her former servant complies only on the condition that she will marry him if he saves Chénier's life. Then comes a sensational trial scene, in which Chénier is arraigned before the revolutionary tribunal. Gérard declares openly that he has falsely denounced the poet, and asks for his release. But the prisoner's blood is wanted, and sentence of death is passed. Maddalena then visits Chénier in prison, and finally, in the guise of another prisoner, accompanies him to the scaffold and shares his fate.

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#### IN MADRID.

The managers of the Madrid theatres have refrained with one accord from the production of anything new in the course of the past month, contenting themselves with a number of short runs of well-known operas, dramas, and farces. The Real has been giving *Faust*, *Carmen*, and *I Pagliani*, and the Comedia,

Lara, Apolo, and Zarzuela have been making up various programmes of three or four short pieces, such as *La Pravianna*, *El Tambor de Granaderos*, *El Coche Correo*, *La Noche de El Trovador*, and the Spanish version of *Charley's Aunt*.

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IN NEW YORK.

It is greatly to be regretted that when Mr. Daly produces his version of *Henry IV.* he will be able to point to a precedent for placing the part of the Prince of Wales in the hands of an actress. The ridicule lately excited by Mrs. Julia Marlowe Taber's performance of Prince Hal in a revival of the play at Palmer's Theatre may well deter even Mr. Daly from putting Miss Rehan in a like position. Mrs. Taber was as successful as any actress could be, but she was ill-advised to make such an attempt. To turn to a pleasanter picture, Mr. W. F. Owen's *Falstaff* one can praise and only praise. The severest criticism can scarcely point to a defect in his carefully-considered presentation. Every side of the character was brought out with a perception of histrionic effect that is found only in the most artistic of actors. The *Hotspur* of Mr. Taber was colourless. Miss Minnie Maddern (Fiske) has been bold enough to challenge a direct comparison with Mme. Bernhardt and Signora Duse, and has come out of the ordeal very creditably. As *Cesarine*, in an adaptation by Miss Alice Kauser of *La Femme de Claude*, Mrs. Fiske, though rather unequal, showed genuine tragic power. She did not shrink from portraying in the most graphic way one of the worst and most degraded women that ever actress was called upon to play. The conception, however, seemed too high for her powers. In a one-act sketch, written by herself, *The Light from St. Agnes*, Mrs. Fiske gives a realistic picture of another degraded woman, whose one effort to rise above herself is rewarded by death at the hands of the man for whom she has become what she is. *Madame*, a four-act play by Mr. Charles Coghlan, written for his sister, Miss Rose Coghlan, has been produced at Palmer's Theatre. It has since been transplanted to Daly's, where it seems to be doing well. At the Fifth Avenue Theatre, *A House of Cards*, a four-act comedy by Mr. Sydney Rosenfeld, is drawing good houses. It is honestly amusing in parts, and is mildly entertaining generally. Many little foibles of society are here touched upon. Miss Maxine Elliott plays the leading part, and therein perhaps lies the secret of the success of the play. *His Absent Boy*, an adaptation of a German farce, has been produced at the Garden Theatre, and by all signs should have a long run. The leading idea is rather clever. A poor man marries a rich woman, and, in order to get a little pocket-money from her, he tells her that he has been married before, has divorced his wife,



and is now responsible for the maintenance of his son. Another husband to whom he confesses his little plan hastens to tell his wife the same tale, and on this notion an excellent three-act farce is built. Miss Isabelle Coe makes the chief acting success. *A Lion's Heart* has been well received at the People's Theatre. *Die Weber*, a nauseating and impossible drama by Gerhardt Hauptman, has been produced at the Irving Place Theatre. The incidents of the slaughtering and the eating of a dog by a starving family ought to seal the fate of any play in which they occur.

#### SIR HENRY IRVING IN AMERICA.

The memorable visit of the Lyceum company to Chicago was marked one night by a programme of singular interest and rich in contrasts, since it included *Don Quixote*, *Godefroi and Yolande*, and *A Story of Waterloo*. Sir Henry Irving's embodiment of the knight of the sorrowful countenance was hailed by the audience with equal surprise and delight. "It appeared," said the *Daily Inter-Ocean*, "as if the figure drawn by Doré had become endowed with life, and the grotesque personage had a reality in the fancies that played in the overwrought brain. In all points it was distinct from any creation that Mr. Irving has given, and was delightful and fascinating in all points as a really wonderful creation. The courtesy, the valour, the tenderness of the poor man, distraught by much reading of mediæval romance, grew almost pathetic in the light of its intense earnestness. All the quaint and ludicrous externals of the heroic old dotard were given with wonderful accuracy. From first to last the artistic illusion was so consistently maintained that the impress on the imagination might readily have deepened to the belief that fiction had perfection in a fact." Responding to a call for a speech at the end, Sir Henry Irving spoke of *Godefroi and Yolande*, then to be produced for the first time, as "the work of my younger son, Laurence." In this play a rather painful mediæval subject is dealt with. Yolande, a beautiful courtesan, is awaiting the coming of a doctor, for whom her clerk, Godefroi, has been sent. Godefroi is deeply in love with Yolande. On his returning with the doctor, a wild and uncouth person, he finds his blind mother and his sister awaiting him. The doctor attends Yolande, and, in strange language and with strange behaviour, hints at something serious in her condition. Godefroi confesses to his mother his love for Yolande, and the blind woman beseeches him to break the shackles which are binding him. A masque is about to be celebrated, and to the court of Yolande come Philippe le Bel, King of France, the Archbishop, his brother, and Sir Sagramour, a young paladin from the Crusades. The avant-courier of the nobles, Sir Sagramour, discovers that

the lovely Yolande is a leper—is stricken with leprosy. A scene of terrible excitement occurs; the King and the Archbishop anathematise Yolande; all flee from her presence except Godefroi, who, declaring his love for her, remains her only support. The executioners come upon the scene, but Godefroi publicly espouses the cause of Yolande, and the two go forth into the world to join the throng of other lepers amidst cries of “Unclean! unclean!” Gruesome as the subject of *Godefroi and Yolande* is, the author treats it with sufficient force to hold his audience without shocking them, and all the papers speak of the piece in encouraging terms. Mr. Laurence Irving would seem to have prosperity before him as a dramatist as well as an actor. “The spectacular episode in which Yolande becomes conscious of her affliction,” writes the *Times-Herald*, after expressing a belief that the theme is a little too repulsive for the stage, “is technically a splendid and triumphant climax, and the suggestion, later on, of the development of moral consciousness in the stricken woman is introduced with unusual eloquence and skill. Indeed, along the technical side of the play there is much to commend, more, in fact, than may be set down in this necessarily hurried review. The workmanship in general and in detail bears not only the mark of originality, but of excellent scholarship. The lines are crisp and forcible. There is no attempt at fine writing—that usual blunder of young and inexperienced writers—and over all there is a glamour of good taste and refinement which bids fair promise for the future of this young aspirant.” Another critic describes the study as “more direct than Maeterlinck, more dramatic than Ibsen.” Of course, Mr. Irving owed much to Miss Ellen Terry, who, “with a wig of bright red hair contrasting with a chalky white hue of complexion, gave,” says the *Chicago Record*, “a vivid impersonation of the courtesan, not forgetting to indicate the luxury-loving character of Yolande, even after her awful fate has been brought home to her.” In the words of the *Times-Herald*, the actress was “magnificently herself.” Mr. Cooper was the Godefroi, Mr. Ben Webster the Sir Sagramour, Mr. Valentine the doctor, Mr. Tyars a frantic hermit, and Miss Mary Rorke the blind mother. Miss May Whitty, Miss Julia Arthur, and Miss Ailsa Craig came forward in quite subordinate parts. Sir Henry Irving’s acting in *A Story of Waterloo* was greeted both by the public and by the press with exceptional enthusiasm. “It cannot,” writes the *Times-Herald*, “be described. It is absolute, haunting, magnificent. Although but a monologue in its important characteristics, the sketch is an intense drama, full of meaning and suggestion, through the extraordinary art of Mr. Irving. Peevish, decrepit second childhood has never before been pictured with such art upon any

stage, and thus, in this brief sketch, Mr. Irving wins new honours."

Going through Indianapolis to Detroit, Sir Henry Irving appeared there on the 26th of March in *The Bells* to what many persons must have thought a painfully overcrowded audience. Again were his claims to distinction recognised in no grudging spirit by the press. "It is long," says the *Detroit Free Press*, "since a like spectacle was seen in that theatre, and it cannot be doubted that the distinguished player deserved it all. His presence as a directing force in the drama has benefited that institution, and instructed and delighted the peoples of the two great English-speaking countries of the world. Whersoever Henry Irving is, there also is the sign of intellectual vigour and the chorus of strenuous and well-directed energy. As has been said with zealous regard for his sincere purpose and noble achievement, contemporary intelligence has been broadened, sharpened, and refined by his sumptuous ministration of the dramatic art, and the world is better because of his beneficent career. This argues conscientious and wise employment of imperial powers, stimulated by motives in which is the minimum of selfishness. Thinking persons do not need to be assured here that Henry Irving has made many personal sacrifices to art. In no one direction has his broad-mindedness been more perceptible than in the modest place which he arrogates to himself and the constant encouragement which he gives to his fellow-players."

The close of March found the company at Cleveland. Here, as elsewhere, they were so successful that the press waxed facetious on the subject. "An organised band of decidedly clever 'professionals,'" said the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* on April 1st, "have been working certain wealthy residents of this city for all the cold cash there is in it. The operations have been going on right under the nose of the police for three or four days, and while the officials have known all about them, it is not known that they have taken any action. In fact, these people work in such a way that the police could not make a case against them if they would. Yet the 'professionals,' for they certainly are decidedly apt in their peculiar art, will take out of this city, at the lowest estimate, 5000 dols. and over. The two chief persons are a man and a woman, and they have several able assistants. It would hardly be wise to mention even the names they assume, for the reason that it cannot be proved that they are guilty of wrong doing. Still, many Cleveland citizens are out of pocket as the result of their brief stay in this city. The party arrived here some time during Sunday. Of course they dress fashionably and put up at fine hotels—that is part of their 'profession.' It is in the night that they do their fine work in landing the dollars. Along about night time they assume various costumes, according



as they think they can succeed best. They do not always go together, but separate frequently. The woman is very smooth of tongue, and those who have put up their dollars are bound to admit, some of them reluctantly, perhaps, that she is quite an actress. A person listening to her cannot help feeling interested in her, because she speaks with so great fluency and acts her assumed part so superbly. At the right time the man comes upon the scene, and he and a few assistants do the rest. The person who was so interested then goes away with a few less dollars in his pocket, but a wiser feeling in his head. It is claimed that this is one of the best plans ever invented for making a fortune on short notice. These people never stay long in a place, but go quickly from one town to another. It has been learned that they have got about all they can out of this town, and will leave for Buffalo to-day."

And to Buffalo the company went, there to begin a short engagement on April 2nd with *The Merchant of Venice*. Rather more than ten years ago Sir Henry Irving and Miss Terry appeared in the same play in the same city. "Since then," the *Buffalo Courier* says, "many Shylocks have sued for their pound of flesh, many Portias have cunningly baulked the Jew upon the local stage, yet that performance still stands out unapproached in excellence. And last night, as the long ago impressions were again one by one freshened, the conviction became more positive than ever that these two players are beyond and above any of this or the last generation in the impersonation of the characters." Above all the Shylocks seen in Buffalo during the last dozen years, including Edwin Booth's, that of Henry Irving, the *Courier* continues, "towers supreme. He seems, as someone has said, the depository of the vengeance of his race. There is a strong, quick, and deep sense of justice mixed up with the gall and bitterness of his resentment. What has been said of Irving's Shylock with regard to his superiority applies with equal force to Miss Terry's acting of Portia. It surpasses the impersonations of other women. She realises the idea which the dramatist conveys to the mind, and that is as far as art can go. It seems almost superfluous to speak of the scenic setting of the play, for to Henry Irving the modern stage owes almost every advance from the crude, conventional sceneries of a generation ago to the opulence which marks theatrical productions nowadays. The pictures on the stage last night reproduced as near as pictures can the living Venice—the streets with their moving populace, the quays with their movements of merchandise, the squares, the houses, all teeming with life. Yet the scene never once dominated the acting. The spectator felt that the performance was worthy of the frame in which it was set."

## Echoes from the Green Room.

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THE attraction at the Lyceum next autumn will be *Cymbeline*, with Sir Henry Irving as Iachimo, Miss Ellen Terry as Imogen, and Mr.—no, we must refrain at present from mentioning his name—as Leonatus.

SIR AUGUSTUS HARRIS has yet again laid all lovers of music under an obligation to him by a season of English opera at Drury Lane, which began on April 4th, and is to be continued till June. His season of Italian opera at Covent Garden promises to be even more successful than that of last year.

THE Prince of Wales very readily consented to grant the use of his name as that of a patron of the matinée for the benefit of Miss Kate Vaughan, which is to take place very shortly. "His royal highness," writes Sir Francis Knollys to Mr. Charles Fulton, who has made all the arrangements for the performance, "is very sorry to hear that she is in such an indifferent state of health." "By all means," runs a letter from Miss Ellen Terry, "please put my name upon the general committee for Miss Vaughan's benefit, as I should desire to be of service in every possible manner to her. I fear, however, we shall not be in London in May or June. Let me hear at your convenience about the programme, &c. If you see Miss Vaughan, please give her my affectionate remembrances." It may be expected that a very considerable sum will be raised for Miss Vaughan on this occasion, besides the direct receipts of the performance.

THE fatigues of his American tour—his travelling, his acting, and the many hospitalities he extends and cannot find it in his heart to refuse—seems to have done Sir Henry Irving less harm than good. The *Detroit Free Press* speaks of his face as showing fewer lines, his form as still erect, his step as firm and elastic. Contrary to a rumour lately spread abroad, he has not the slightest intention to retire from the stage in the course of a few years. Indeed, he has several new ideas fermenting in his head, and is not free from the suspicion of wishing to rival his friend Mr. Gladstone as a Grand Old Man "Although," he told an interviewer at Detroit, "I am fifty-eight, and have been forty years on the stage, I feel almost young. I find it hard to realise that I have worked so long in my profession."

THOUGH Chicago has not been prosperous of late, Sir Henry Irving's engagement there was exceptionally profitable. The local correspondent of the *New York Dramatic Mirror* is moved to jest on the subject. "The man who carried the receipts from the theatre to the bank," he says, "rapidly became round-shouldered and careworn. Sir Henry is breaking Chicago, to be plain about it. He will be indirectly responsible for a host of unredeemed pledges, because the man who hasn't the money for the entertainment will go even to the extremity of three balls to obtain the same. I am simply stating facts."

ONE of the most striking audiences Sir Henry Irving has faced was that which assembled in the Kent Theatre, Chicago University, on March 17, when he delivered his lecture on *Macbeth*. The rush for seats was fierce enough to threaten serious consequences. Hundreds were unable to get within sight or hearing of the lecturer, and had to leave disappointed. Greeted on his entrance with the university "yell" of welcome in full blast, he seemed for a moment to be taken aback, but was reassured by a shout from an admiring student—"He's all right!"

SIR HENRY speaks hopefully and sensibly as to the prospects of an American national drama. "They are wonderful, or rather will be so. It is almost

too early in the life of the American people for the writing of really great plays. But with the lapse of time the opportunities for enduring work by American dramatists will become more available, more real. There is the Civil War period, for instance—a remarkable field for the coming dramatist. The American nation is too young, the great events in her history are too nearly contemporaneous at this time, however, for the production of great dramatic plays. But, mark you, the time is coming when all the rich material in the history of this remarkable branch of the Anglo-Saxon peoples will yield fine fruit, and there will be many worthy contributions to the American drama—yea, to the world's drama."

THERE are no limits to the audacity—we had almost used a stronger word—of American interviewers. One of them lately asked Sir Henry Irving whether he was a Christian. "Indeed I am," he replied. "I believe in immortality, and my belief is strengthened with advancing years. Without faith in things spiritual, this life would indeed be a weary waste."

IT is astonishing that an audience can be so indifferent to the charm of theatrical illusion as to call upon a player for a speech during a performance. Lately, however, Sir Henry Irving had to meet such a demand at Detroit, just after the termination of the second act of *The Bells*, with which he opened his engagement there. Probably both in sorrow and in anger, he felt constrained to comply, though the result must have been to rob that tremendous dream scene of some of its effect. Why could not these silly clamourers have waited until the end of the performance?

MANY a young actor has had, and will have, reason to be grateful to Sir Henry Irving for a word of criticism. "I will give you a year," he said to one with a rattling delivery, "to give this speech in such a way that you shall make your audience imagine for a moment that you have not got it by heart."

SIR HENRY IRVING has been elected an honorary member of the American Whig Society of Princeton University.

CURIOUS things are said about Sir Henry in America. Among others, it is suggested that he owed his first conspicuous success to American enterprise. "Augustin Daly," says a critic, "wrote *Leah* for Colonel Bateman. It was an enormous hit at the Adelphi, yielding a profit of thousands of pounds. This money enabled the Colonel to take the Lyceum. Thus Daly had in a roundabout way everything to do with the Mathias event. Daly's brain made *Leah*, *Leah* made Bateman's money, Bateman's money produced *The Bells*, *The Bells* made Irving." So is history sometimes written. Mr. Daly's brain did not make *Leah*, which was simply an adaptation of Mosenthal's *Deborah*. Mr. Bateman saw nothing in *The Bells*, and consented to produce it only on the condition that Mr. Irving bore the cost of its production. Had it not succeeded, the theatre would have been closed in bankruptcy two days afterwards.

MISS ELLEN TERRY, as not a few know, can say pretty things. "Have you got used to Irving's title?" she was recently asked. "Oh, yes," was the reply; "he has been a prince in my eyes for many years."

MADAME BERNHARDT's admirers have chosen many curious ways of expressing their admiration of her, but never, surely, can she have had so strange an experience as when she found at Montreal the other day that the students of the University had introduced an organ into the auditorium, having hired for their purpose no fewer than 900 seats. At the close of the performance the students' poet, a French-Canadian, declaimed some verses in Madame Bernhardt's honour, accompanied by the organ player, and assisted, when he came to the chorus of his lines, by the entire audience. "La grande et sublime Sarah," as she was styled by the enthusiastic rhymester, was delighted with



such a novel mark of adoration, though she cannot have thought much of the poem in which she was addressed.

MADAME ALBANI has arrived in England from America.

MADAME MODJESKA, who is at present taking a short rest on her Californian ranch, announces a farewell tour for 1896-7.

MR. HARE is doing 'extremely well in America. Lately, at Pittsburgh, he reappeared as Jack Pontifex in *Mamma*, a character he has made his own in London.

MADAME MINNIE HAWK lately visited Egypt and the Holy Land, previously being received in special audience by the Pope and singing privately before the Queen of Italy.

MR. TOOLE has taken what he calls a holiday trip among the London suburban theatres, acting in each with his usual success. It would be difficult to set bounds to his popularity with all classes, old and young, rich and poor, high and low.

SIR AUGUSTUS HARRIS has been to Vienna, chiefly to ascertain for himself whether Herr Goldmark's *Cricket on the Hearth* would be likely to succeed in London.

MR. CALMOUR is writing a romantic piece in three acts for Mr. Tree.

*Henry IV.* will be revived at the Haymarket on Monday afternoon, May 4th.

*For the Crown* is doing so well at the Lyceum that Mr. Forbes Robertson may not find it necessary to produce anything else there. Some statements that have appeared as to the pieces he has in hand would seem to be a little premature.

MR. AND MRS. FRED TERRY have left Mr. Hare, and were to sail for England on April 22nd. They will be seen at the St. James's in a new play by Mr. Carton, and then in one by Mr. Pinero.

MR. BOURCHIER will appear this season as young Wilding in a revival of *The Liar*.

THE Princess of Wales will be a patroness of the bazaar to be held at Queen's Hall at the end of June in aid of the Actors' Orphanage, formed in connection with the London Orphan Asylum at Watford.

THE next yearly dinner in aid of the Royal General Theatrical Fund will take place at the Hôtel Métropole on May 28, Lord Russell of Killowen presiding.

ENCOURAGED by the success of *Trilby*, Mr. du Maurier may consent to a dramatic version of his earlier novel, *Peter Ibbetson*.

It is not true that Mr. Waring has secured the English rights of *Les Deux Gosses*, which, adapted by Mr. Sims and Mr. Shirley, will be produced at the Princess's during the summer by Mr. Albert Gilmer, the latest addition to the ranks of young managers.

M. JULES CLARETIE, the manager of the Comédie Française, was lately in London. Among the things he saw was Mr. Sant's half-length portrait of Miss Dorothea Baird as *Trilby*, which is to be exhibited at the Royal Academy. "Nothing," he writes, "could be a better likeness than this picture; nobody more charming than the young actress who embodies the little model thrown into the midst of Parisian bohemianism." Of Mr. Tree's Svengali, too, M. Claretie has many pretty things to say.

As might have been supposed, the leading article in the last number of *The Theatre* on the dramatic criticism of the *Daily Telegraph* has excited a good deal of interest. Not a few worthy persons appear to be aghast at our temerity, and it is no exaggeration to say that scores of articles and paragraphs have been devoted by the Press to the subject. In one quarter we have been

likened to Ivanhoe, who, "riding straight up to the central pavilion," in the lists at Ashby, "struck with the sharp end of his spear the shield of Brian de Bois-Guilbert until it rang again."

The *Bristol Times* describes the article as "the most damaging criticism of the criticisms of the *Daily Telegraph* that any magazine could produce." The *Sheffield Independent* says that the writer, "with the aid of innumerable instances, attempts to prove, and with a good deal of success, that in matters theatrical our powerful London contemporary is credited with an influence very much over-estimated, and that there is no need for actors and managers to 'prostrate themselves before the supposed god of their idolatry.'" "The criticisms of the *Daily Telegraph*," writes the *Bristol Mercury*, "are examined with the object of showing how often that paper has been wrong in its first-night prophecies of the fate of a new play. It is, of course, impossible to tell what the public may do, for there are very good plays that have failed, and there are bad plays that have succeeded, and few critics would stand the test very well if they were thus placed upon the level of sporting prophets. But the professional worship of the *Telegraph* under the mistaken notion that Mr. Clement Scott writes (all) its criticisms is, of course, misplaced, and this article shows that the verdict of the *Telegraph* does not settle the fate of the production."

"THE supposed god of their idolatry." But, as a London contemporary asks, is there only one god? It is reported that there are two, and that they do not always agree. Not long ago there was a very hostile notice of a new piece. Those outside the theatre felt that all was over, that the shutters would have to go up. The management knew better. Now we know—at any rate, the Green Room Club knows—why they knew better. Another god on the same journal had already proclaimed his views, which were most favourable to the piece. He had witnessed a performance of it elsewhere, and had not scrupled to declare that it would take the town. What have the management done? They have quoted the opinion of "god" number one, and ignored the pronouncement of "god" number two.

LAST month the *Daily Telegraph* informed the world that an actress already famous in a successful West-end farce had suddenly risen to the utmost heights of tragic eminence by her performance in a little one-act play which on the previous night had preceded that farce for the first time. Can it be that the public has learnt to look askance upon the production that is unfortunate enough to incur the praises of the *Daily Telegraph*? Of the large audience that waited upon *The Chili Widow* on April 17, the very day which saw the publication of the elaborate panegyric upon Miss Vanbrugh's tragic powers—fewer than two dozen pittites took the trouble to go three-quarters of an hour earlier, and an even smaller number of spectators were seen in the stalls.

IN Mr. Arthur Cecil, who died at Brighton on the 16th of April, at the age of fifty-two, we lose an actor of special individuality. The son of an eminent solicitor, he was originally intended for the Army, but soon resolved to go on the stage. He began with the German Reeds in 1869, presently turned his attention to legitimate comedy, and by 1876 had succeeded well enough to be engaged by Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft at the old Prince of Wales's. Here he "created" three parts with which his name will long be associated—Sir Woodbine Grafton in *Peril*, the Rev. Noel Haygarth in *The Vicarage*, and Baron Stein in *Diplomacy*. For a time, in conjunction with Mr. John Clayton, he was a manager of the Court Theatre, achieving marked success in the farcical comedies Mr. Pinero sent to that house. Arthur Cecil Blunt (to give him his full name) was what is known in theatrical argot as a "mugger"—that is, one who resorts to exaggerated facial expression; but in all other respects he was a genuine artist. Like Louis XIV., he had an insatiable appetite. He

ate about six square meals a day, and had food at his bedside *en cas de nuit*. He was buried at Mortlake, one of the wreaths laid upon his coffin coming as a mark of "sincere regard" from the Duke and Duchess of Teck.

THE EXAMINER of Plays has firmly refused to license *Joseph of Canaan*, on the ground that no Biblical characters should be presented on the stage. The Rev. George Walters, the author, and Mr. George Rignold, the representative of the chief part, both of whom have come from Australia in the full belief that the success it achieved there would be repeated here, are understood to be gazing at each other in almost inarticulate despair. "I fancy," writes Mr. G. R. Sims, "that Mr. Redford's decision will be generally approved. If he were not to draw a hard and fast line we should presently have the most sacred subjects dealt with not only in a dramatic but in a theatrical manner; and the playhouse, whatever it may be in the future, is not at present exactly the place in which the heroes and heroines of Scripture should live and breathe again. There is nothing objectionable in *Joseph of Canaan*, but if one Bible play were licensed all would have to be licensed, provided they did not outrage decorum, and in course of time we should have the Passion Play in full swing, and the story of the Divine tragedy worked up as a music-hall sketch."

Is it permissible to bet upon a certainty? Some weeks ago, after a pleasant supper, Mr. George Rignold spoke of Sir Henry Irving's revival of *The Merchant of Venice* as having taken place for the first time in 1880. "It was in 1879," remarked a journalist among the company present. "I'll bet you £100 to £5 that it was in 1880," the actor said. "No bet," was the reply; "I know that I am right." Mr. Rignold repeated his challenge, but to no purpose. And right the journalist was, as he usually is in the matter of dates. In one way his decision is to be regretted, for the money—we are able to state this with the fullest possible confidence—would assuredly have gone to theatrical charities.

THE old Puritan mistrust of "shows and mummeries" is sometimes opposed in quarters where such opposition is least expected. Even a Capuchin monk has been telling his flock that he can see nothing but good in *The Sign of the Cross*. He points out that "those who cannot be brought to hear the Divine Word spoken in churches can often be reached and stirred to serious thought by plays of so elevating a character."

IN connection with the visit of *The Sign of the Cross* company to Norwich Theatre, a letter from the Bishop of the diocese was read at a Sunday service at St. Clement's Church. He wrote to express his willingness, for the quieting of the consciences of the faithful, to dispense them from their obligations as to Lenten observance so far as would enable them to witness the performance of a play that, according to information furnished him, was not only of value educationally, but was of a distinctly religious character.

THE annual general meeting of the Actors' Association was held on the stage of the Lyric Theatre on March 31st, Mr. Wilson Barrett presiding. The report showed that the association still continues to do excellent work. Mr. George Alexander proposed the health of the chairman, who, he said, was the first manager to offer him a London engagement, the terms being six pounds a week. "Well," Mr. Barrett remarked in reply, "I can only say I am quite willing to repeat the offer. If Mr. Alexander comes up at once I will not reduce the payment by one penny."

MR. H. A. RUDALL, who died last month, possessed qualities as a critic and composer which in more favourable circumstances might have brought him considerable fame. He belonged to a family of rich merchants, and studying music, in the first instance as an amateur, studied it very assiduously. At this time he contributed to *All the Year Round*, under the editorship of



Charles Dickens, and wrote several plays. One of these is to be produced at a *matinée* towards the end of next month. He occasionally assisted the late Dr. Hueffer in the musical criticism of *The Times*, and was the author of the volume on Beethoven in the "Great Musicians" series. He composed many songs, all deserving the attention of musicians and musical critics. His death deprives *The Theatre* of a valued contributor.

MR. A. E. W. MASON, whose novel, *The Courtship of Morrice Buckler*, has placed him high among contemporary writers of romance, was until quite recently a member of the theatrical profession. Leaving Oxford some years ago, he took to the stage, and had a wide and varied experience of the actor's life and calling. For two years he played in old comedy with Mr. Edward Compton's company; he also appeared as Armand D'Arcy in *A Village Priest* in the provinces; he was for eighteen months Miss Isabel Bateman's leading supporter, and was one of the cast in Mr. Bernard Shaw's *Arms and the Man* at the Avenue.

Nor a few English playgoers will regret to hear of the death of Madame Anaïs Fargueil, which occurred lately in Paris. For many years she held a leading position on the French stage, especially at the Vaudeville. Daughter of a player, she entered the Conservatoire in 1831, at the age of twelve years, and won the prize for singing. In 1835 she made her *début* at the Opéra Comique, but with a voice ruined by a chest complaint. "C'est un buisson de roses d'où sort un filet de vinaigre," said Jules Janin. Beautiful, clever, and energetic, she next turned her attention to the drama, her progress in which was remarkably rapid. She particularly distinguished herself in the chief parts of *Les Filles de Marbre*, *Le Mariage d'Olympe*, *Nos Intimes*, *La Maison Neuve*, *Les Brebis de Panarge*, *Miss Mutton*, *Les Pattes de Mouches*, *Patrie*, *L'Oncle Sam*, and *Rose Michel*. For the last thirteen years she had lived in retirement, her savings, joined to 30,000 francs brought to her by a benefit at the Vaudeville, placing her above want.

*Manon Roland* is in active rehearsal at the Comédie Française. Mlle. Bartet has been compelled by ill health to give up the chief part, which will be undertaken by Madame Worms-Baretta.

THE first representation of *Hellé* at the Paris Opera has been fixed for April 27.

M. EDOUARD PAILLERON will read two short pieces to the committee of the Comédie Française when *Manon Roland* has been brought out.

It is announced as a certainty that M. Massenet's *Cendrillon* will be produced at the Paris Opéra Comique next season, besides, perhaps, works by M. Pierné, M. Erlanger, and M. Fernand Le Borne. M. Carvalho is about to revive one of the most delightful works of the late Ambroise Thomas, the *Caid*, with Mlle. Tephaine as Virginie, M. Herman Devriès as the Tambour Major, and M. Carbonne as Birotteau.

So *La Route de Thèbes*, the play on which M. Alexandre Dumas had been at work for so long, is never to see the light. We learn this on the authority of M. Ange Galdemar, who has been requested by Madame Dumas to put an end to all doubts on the subject. The piece was nearly completed, but M. Dumas left instructions, too definite to be disregarded, that neither this nor another play of which he had written a part should be given to the stage.

M. JULES BARBIER's new drama, *Blandine*, has been refused at the Comédie Française.

PRINCE BISMARCK is an admirer of music, not merely as a matter of personal taste, but because he regards it as a factor in the destinies of nations. He thinks that the "Watch on the Rhine" contributed in no small degree to the triumph of Germany over France in 1870. "There is nothing," he lately

said to a correspondent, "like music to stir the masses. Our alliance with Austria rests upon intellectual affinities, among which this is not the least. We should not be so much at one with Vienna if Haydn and Mozart and Beethoven had not formed an artistic bond between the two countries. Upon my word, I am inclined to think that our alliance with Italy, at the beginning, was more musical than political. In spite of my nationality, I am a sincere lover of Italian music."

SIGNOR LEONCAVALLO's *Chatterton*, of which we gave an account last month, has produced a widespread effect in Rome, though produced at a time when the Italian disasters in Abyssinia were uppermost in every mind. Its principal arias are sung and hummed all over the city.

How Signor Mascagni and Signor Leoncavallo obtained their first chances as composers is not so well known as it deserves to be. Signor Sonzogno, the Milan publisher, offered prizes for the best opera that should be sent to him within a prescribed period. The first went to Signor Mascagni, a baker's son, for *Cavalleria Rusticana*, and the second to Signor Leoncavallo, whom not a few critics are disposed to regard as the more important of the two.

SIGNOR DE LARA's opera, *Amy Robsart*, was recently performed for the first time in Italy at the Pergola Theatre, Florence, in the presence of an audience including the Princess of Monaco, Princess Yarolath, and Princess Scilla.

MR. JEFFERSON is rightly sensitive as to the dignity of his profession. One night last month, after a dinner at the Lotos Club, New York, a clergyman made a speech. Intending to compliment Mr. Jefferson, the guest of the evening, dwelt upon the manner in which that eminent actor, "amidst the temptations of a stage life, had yet succeeded in keeping his name clean and unsullied." Severe indeed was the snub which this piece of impertinence brought upon the speaker. "I object," Mr. Jefferson said, "to being singled out for a characterisation of exclusive respectability. I cannot permit anyone, even a clergyman, to pay me a tribute which implies a reproach to the profession to which I have so long belonged."

SIR AUGUSTUS HARRIS has a rival in many-sided energy. We refer to Mr. Henry Clay Miner, of New York. He has on hand five theatres, a drug store, a studio of photography, and a dramatic annual. He speculates extensively in mines, tramways, and syndicate journals. He is also an active politician. It was at one of his theatres in New York that Signora Duse lately appeared.

MR. RICHARD MANSFIELD, who was recently credited with an intention to exchange the stage for the lecture platform, has signed a contract with Mr. Daniel Frohman, the manager of the New York Lyceum, for a period of four years, to begin in September next.

MR. AUBREY BOUTICAULT, whose mother tongue is French, will probably leave New York for Paris this summer, there to play in an adaptation by M. Catulle Mendès of *The Shaughraun*. *Arrah-na-Pogue*, it may be remembered, had a long run at the Gaité under the title of *Jean la Poste*.

THE project of representing a Passion play in New York recalls to mind a vanished figure of that city. Salvia Morac had but one idea, that of producing such a work. He spent all he possessed in scenery and costumes, described as historically accurate. He went about for years in search of someone who would find the money for his enterprise, but invariably without success. He died in extreme poverty, leaving directions that his play should be destroyed.

MRS. BROWN POTTER and Mr. Kyrle Bellew, now in America, are about to go on another Australian tour. They begin at Sydney on May 30th in *As You Like It*. Other pieces in their repertory are *A Royal Divorce*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *La Tosca*, *David Garrick*, *Camille*, *Fraucillon*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, and *The School for Scandal*.





"THE THEATRE," JUNE, 1896.



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MISS EVELYN MILLARD.

# THE THEATRE.

JUNE, 1896.

## Our Watch Tower.

—♦♦—  
“AUTHOR! AUTHOR!”



AN unusual scene was witnessed at the Garrick Theatre, London, on the night of the first performance of Mr. Henry Arthur Jones's play, *The Rogue's Comedy*. The work had been well received throughout, and at the fall of the curtain the applause was loud and unanimous. It was more than that—it was greatly prolonged. The curtain was raised, in reply to it, more than once; but though Mr. Willard bowed his acknowledgments, Mr. Jones did not respond to the calls for “Author!” which made themselves heard. Mr. Willard came forward a second time, but still Mr. Jones made no sign, and meanwhile the entire audience remained standing, “pit” and “gallery” maintaining their applause, and “stalls” and “boxes” waiting to see what might happen. At length the footlights were extinguished, and then the “stalls” and “boxes” began to move towards the doors, gradually leaving the theatre. It appears, however, that nearly half-an-hour—twenty-seven minutes, to be quite accurate—elapsed after the close of the play before the “pit” and “gallery” finally ceased their uproar and were prevailed upon to go out into the street.

Mr. Jones afterwards wrote to the daily newspapers to explain why he declined the call so noisily and pertinaciously made. He had evidence, he said, that the general feeling of the audience on the night in question was “most cordial and enthusiastic.” On each of his recent first nights, however, one or two persons had persistently “booed” and hissed him; and “one single dissentient can make himself heard in an audience of a thousand,” giving colour to the statement that the piece had met with an unfavourable reception. “All intelligent praise of my work,” Mr. Jones

went on to say, "is most sweet to me, and no man is more responsive to it than I am; but my experience of first-night applause or condemnation leads me to place no value upon it at all. I have been lavishly applauded for some of my worst work, I have been hooted for some of my best; and except for my manager's sake and for the pecuniary success, I do not care a jot whether I am hooted or cheered." Mr. Jones appears to have received abusive anonymous letters, and to be convinced that he has been persecuted on the first nights he refers to by a few malignant spirits. Hence his refusal to appear before the curtain at the *première* of *The Rogue's Comedy*.

We are inclined to agree with Mr. Jones in his estimate of first-night approval or the reverse, and to believe that managers as well as authors may be exhorted to be neither over-elated by the one nor over-depressed by the other. Often and often it has been proved that the "verdict" pronounced at a *première* is no certain guide to the future of a play. Assuredly, in refusing to come before the audience on the occasion we are discussing, Mr. Jones, whatever were his reasons, was at least well within his rights. No gathering of playgoers is entitled to demand that a dramatic author—or, for that matter, a manager or an actor—shall answer to its call. All that it has done has been to pay its money in return for a certain proffered article. It has been offered an entertainment in the shape of the representation of a play; it has paid for that entertainment, and, having obtained it, has no business to ask for, or to look for, more. Whatever else it may get, in the shape of appearances of actors, managers, or authors, before the curtain, must be wholly of the nature of voluntary concessions.

On the other hand, there is that powerful and important element in all such matters—the element of "use and wont." The public—or the noisy section of it—has been rather spoiled by those who cater for it. It has found managers, actors, authors, alike too yielding in this business. It is true that call-taking does not figure in the printed programmes of our theatres, but it has become a habit nevertheless. Again and again, actors have filed across the stage, in front of the curtain, in ludicrous and undignified processions. Again and again, managers have conceded the "few words" for which some at least of their patrons have seemed to crave. Again and again, playwrights have presented themselves on the stage, usually hand in hand with the manager, and smirking with evident gratification at having been summoned. Mr. Jones himself has, up to the first night of *The Rogue's Comedy*, displayed perfect willingness to recognise, personally, the call for "Author!" How was the



audience at the Garrick, on the evening of April 21st, to know that Mr. Jones had suddenly decided to break through his custom and to ignore the demand for his appearance at the wings?

Unquestionably, if playwrights made a point of never, in any circumstances, coming before the footlights, they would consult in all cases their dignity, and in some instances their peace of mind. With managers and actors it is different; they are in the habit of submitting themselves to the gaze of playgoers, and of accepting, with more or less equanimity, either their approbation or their blame. In the case of actors, such personal exhibition is part and parcel of their art and their profession. It is inevitable, and carries with it neither discomfort nor disgrace. Players must needs be seen as well as heard, and there is no reason why they should not, if they choose, respond to calls in moderation, and without absurd parade. The dramatic author is in another category altogether. Your poet and your novelist do not stand behind their publishers' counter and bow to every bookseller's messenger who purchases copies of their books; why should your playwright make obeisance to the persons who have put down their half-guinea or their half-a-crown to witness a performance of his work? Why should he expose himself to the possible hisses of the gallery, the possible booing of the pit?

We admit at once that there is another side to the picture. As things are, there is a certain ungraciousness in not responding to what appears to be the unanimous desire of an audience. If the demonstration at the end of a representation is of the kind which the newspapers call "mixed"—if the reception accorded to a piece on its first night is what the same authorities term "dubious"—then, obviously, no one need be surprised if the playwright objects to running the gauntlet; it is not to be expected that he would, it is not to be desired that he should. But there are, happily, occasions when gatherings of playgoers are genuinely, and even enthusiastically, anxious to congratulate dramatic authors upon the pleasure they have given, the success they have achieved. What is to be done then? If there were a law, written or unwritten, that playwrights should never come, or be asked to come, *in propria persona*, before the footlights, then the thing would be settled, once for all; but so long as authors, as a body, do reply to calls, then those among them who reject the invitation of an evidently friendly assembly will necessarily place themselves in a distressful position; they will seem to be wanting in courtesy to a public which has for them nothing but kindness.

On the whole, as playwrights are not likely ever to combine in a general refusal of calls from playgoers, there seems

nothing for it but to leave the authors of plays to decide upon each case as it arises. They must be allowed (as they ought to be allowed) to judge in each instance for themselves. Mr. Jones having set a bold example, that example may be followed increasingly in the future. Dramatists may exhibit a growing unwillingness to figure before the footlights; they may reserve (as they would do well to reserve) their appearances there for the rare occasions of overwhelming enthusiasm. What audiences, on their part, have to understand is that they cannot force an author to appear if he is not so minded, and that they have no right to try to force him. When once the play is over, their business is to leave the theatre, which belongs to the manager, not to them. No section of them has any right whatever to impede the egress of the majority, to cause the lights to be kept up longer than is essential, to delay the attendants in the execution of their duty, to prevent the prompt closing of the building. Applause in moderation is welcome alike to managers, actors, and playwrights; it is as music to their ears. But it is possible to have too much even of a good thing. When it becomes apparent—as it needs must do very soon—that those behind the curtain do not intend to answer any further call, or, it may be, any call at all, then the duty of the playgoer is clear; it is his duty to leave the theatre with all reasonable speed. And in this respect, we hold, it is the duty of the stalls and boxes to give the pit and gallery a judicious “lead.” The occupants of the higher-priced seats in a theatre are (our observation tells us) much too apt to dawdle, after the curtain is down, out of sheer curiosity as to what may result from the undue demonstrations elsewhere. “Will the author come forward?” “Will the manager make a speech?” “Is there any chance of a disturbance?” Stalls and boxes on a first night are invariably occupied by people who ought to know better than to encourage a few hot-headed youths in pit and gallery in ebullitions for which there is no excuse. Let them show a more excellent way in future. And as for those persons in the cheaper parts of the house who at *premières* display a disposition not to “go home till morning,” we should be inclined to say that managers would be justified in putting some extra pressure upon them in the form of a gentle but decisive ejection. The bulk of public opinion, we are sure, would be upon the side of such action. However, such incidents as that on which we have here commented are not very numerous, and we may place a good deal of trust in the common-sense and good feeling of the public. It is hardly likely that in London managers will ever be called upon to resort at all freely to the exercise of *force majeure*.

## Portraits.

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### MISS EVELYN MILLARD.

IT would puzzle most people to be asked to say exactly what it is in Miss Millard's acting that they would have altered, what particular fault it is that prevents her from taking place among the really fine actresses of the day. She has been called in these pages "an absolute mistress of the mechanism of her art," and the verdict will hardly be disputed by any who have watched her career since it began some five years ago with a useful course of study under Miss Sarah Thorne. Yet she fails just at the point where an artist who is more than merely clever must succeed. She fails, that is to say, to enforce conviction, to thrill and move her audience by the magnetism of personality, to "carry them away," in the popular phrase, by the power and inspiration of her playing. No doubt in time this defect will disappear. When it does, Miss Millard will spring at once into the foremost rank of her profession. Such performances as hers in *Sowing the Wind*, in spite of a too persistent tendency to imitate Miss Emery, or as the unhappy Lois in Mr. Esmond's piece, *The Divided Way*, only need the stamp of absolute conviction, the note of untrammelled naturalness to rank very high indeed. The daughter of a well-known professor of elocution, the young actress began her stage-life under favouring conditions. After a "walk on" in *The Dancing Girl*, and after student days at Margate, a tour with Mr. Thomas Thorne gave her the chance of trying her strength in such parts as Sophia, Miss Tomboy, and Clara Douglas in *Money*. So well did she acquit herself that a London engagement was soon offered, and her accession to the Adelphi company during the run of *The Trumpet Call*, in which she took up the part originally played by Miss Elizabeth Robins, was followed by the appearance of singularly favourable notices. At the Adelphi, Miss Millard stayed for the best part of two years, receiving leading parts in *The White Rose*, *The Lights of Home*, and *The Black Domino*, and showing a quick and intelligent appreciation of the qualities required for melodrama. Next came a tour with *Sowing the Wind*, in which piece she played also when Mr. Carr revived it in London last year; and then, in 1894, Miss Millard began her association with the St. James's Theatre, taking up, with considerable success, the part of Dulcie Larondie in *The Masqueraders*. In *The Prisoner of Zenda* she displays more emotional force than is usually noticeable in her acting, while the charm of her presence gives to a slight part an effectiveness that adds much to the attractive qualities of the piece.



## The Round Table.

### THE FINANCIER ON THE STAGE.

BY JOSEPH KNIGHT.

LIKE other forms of dishonesty, what is now known as stock-exchange rascality has its roots deep in human nature, and asserted itself in some shape or other so soon as man abandoned pastoral life and congregated in cities. In its present shape it is, of course, a thing of modern growth. Dubious proceedings in stocks have been conducted by men of high reputation, and have been connived at by ministers and monarchs. Financial records in France and England have during centuries supplied one perpetual history of knavery and embezzlement, traces of which, more or less distinct, are yet to be found in both countries. Practically the kind of fraud which is illustrated in *The Rogue's Comedy* and in kindred works began in the last century with the South Sea Bubble in England and the schemes of Law in France. Long before that time we had had dramatic pictures of swindlers, usurers, and robbers only differing from the Mercadets of subsequent days in the fashion in which all characters of the Tudor dramatists differ from those of their successors, namely, in boldness of criminality and hardihood of assertion. Passing over the Jew of Marlowe and other characters that present themselves, one finds the finest specimen in existence of financial rapacity and uncompromising villainy in Massinger's Sir Giles Overreach—Kean's great character in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*. Like his original in real life, Sir Giles Mompesson, this man has a Justice in his pay to give sanction, apparently legal, to his oppressions and injuries. Sir Giles Overreach, "Cormorant Overreach," as he is called, is the boldest and most heroical extortioner that the stage has known, moved by the imprecations of widows and orphans only

As rocks are,  
When foamy billows split themselves against  
Their flinty ribs ; or as the moon is moved  
When wolves, with hunger pined, howl at her brightness.

He is, of course, a more potent villain than any by whom he is followed ; but though living in different times, he is of the race of

Mercadet, and is fooled like Turcaret. There is something almost plaintive in his wail—

Nor will I e'er believe it—'sdeath ! I will not,  
That I, that, in all passages I touch'd  
At worldly profit, have not left a print  
Where I have trod, for the most curious search  
To trace my footsteps, should be gull'd by children,  
Baffled and fool'd and all my hopes and labours  
Defeated and made void.

Lesage's *Turcaret* was produced in 1709. Turcaret spends his large and ill-earned fortune in debauchery. Of base extraction—like Ruy Blas he was a lackey—he has risen into the region of the highest finance. Miserly in his dealings with his family, he keeps his wife in the country in poverty, while he squanders large sums upon the women he seeks to corrupt. He is, of course, cheated, *bafoué*, and ridiculed ; his amorous pretensions are derided. *Turcaret* is a brilliant satire against the farmers of the public revenues, and the knaves and sharpers of a world such as Casanove subsequently depicted. It is doubtful, however, whether it would have enjoyed a reputation such as has attended it but for the keen opposition of those whose vices were lashed in its performances, an opposition only overcome by the personal interference of the Dauphin. From Turcaret to Mercadet is a long leap. More than one similar character, of course, was seen during the interval. Trapolin, the hero of *Les Agioteurs* of Dancourt (1710), like Turcaret, is originally a lackey, and develops into a usurer. Alcimon, in *Le Financier* of Sainte-Foix (1761), has some traits in common. *L'Agiotage* of Picard I know by name only. *Mercadet le Faiseur*, first produced at the Gymnase in 1849, is the most masterly sketch of a company promoter or a stock-exchange broker that has yet been produced. Mercadet is a growth of Balzac's close and scrupulous observation and matchless insight. Full as he is of schemes and wiles, and fervid as are his imaginings, almost as fervid as those of Balzac, his creator, who used to go and lug his friends out of bed in the small hours of the morning in order that they might start at once for some remote part of the world to make their fortunes, Mercadet is scarcely a swindler in the accepted sense of the word. Cramp him not ; give him time and he will make his own fortune and yours too if you are fortunate enough to realise his potentialities and be associated with him in any of his plans. He is, as says Théophile Gautier, Robert Macaire honest. With characteristic boldness, moreover, Balzac shows the creditors of Mercadet as no less ferociously avaricious than himself. Man

for man you put the arch plotter above any of the meaner spirits whom greed has led to associate themselves in enterprises they do their best to wreck. Affable Hawk, the English equivalent of Mercadet in George Henry Lewers' hurriedly written adaptation, *A Game of Speculation*, is by general consent a poor and colourless imitation. Mathews defends his view of the part, and deprecates earnestly and with some justice a comparison between himself and Got, who succeeded Geoffroy, the creator of the original rôle. Very ingenious if not convincing is Mathews's thesis that there is nothing in Balzac inconsistent with the light, sparkling, fussy comedy with which he charged the piece. The world has remained of another opinion. One more French play, built to a certain extent upon the same lines, and more than once adapted into English, gave rise to protests no less loud. This is *Montjoye*, by M. Octave Feuillet, well known to English playgoers as *Mammon*, in which Mr. Vernon established his reputation, and even better known by the Haymarket version, *A Bunch of Violets*, in which Mr. Tree as Sir Philip Marchant made a no less abiding impression. Of the series, Mr. Jones's Bailey Prothero is the latest. He is differentiated from his predecessors in many respects. His origin can scarcely be lower than that of Turcaret; but it is from an early period charged with crime. When he first comes upon the stage he has some cause to dread the interference of the police. He is, moreover, not in the least a financier. He is, on the contrary, an impecunious and somewhat pitiful vagabond upon whom greatness, in the sense of company promoting, is thrust. He is a charlatan of the commonest type, dealing with the pseudo mysteries of second sight and drawing-room magic. One or two lucky guesses, they are no more, since he has not the slightest information, give him a chance in life so remote that it has scarcely been worth his while to pine for it. As he tells Lady Clarabut, he has never had the opportunity to make his fortune. He is, however, of the race of Mercadet and Montjoye, though hardly of that of Sir Giles Overreach or Turcaret. Happily married to a woman who is at once wife and confederate, he is as blameless in morals as a Charles the First. In finance, however, he is an apt pupil. He picks up the jargon, as it seems, by instinct; and has all the plausibility necessary to a life of successful chicanery, for which indeed his early training has prepared him. He expatiates on the need of confidence just as a man with a pocket full of notes on the Bank of Elegance preaches to a country yokel or a would-be smart American. That in the end he makes some sort of expiation, and carries into self-elected banishment some measure of our sympathy, is because, under the combined influence of actors and public, modern dramatists,



dare not face the problems they raise. Mr. Jones has not given us a Sir Giles. We are not likely to see another. He has not given us a Turcaret ; conditions of life are now changed. If he has not given us a Mercadet or a Montjoye it is perhaps because the ground is occupied. We of this younger generation have many grievances against our predecessors.

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## STAGE SWORDSMANSHIP.

BY WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK.

IF one were to write about absurdities in fiction—and in fiction by masters of the art—concerning swordsmanship, as well as about the merits and demerits of swordsmanship on the stage, one might readily fill, if not a personable, at least by no means an exiguous volume. To take two instances which rise at once to the memory, as they will to that of any novel-reader who takes an interest in *l'arme blanche*, there is a celebrated passage in a novel by the great Dumas, in which the colossal author gravely asserts that one of the combatants in a sword duel “opened his attack with a vigorous *contre-de-carte*,” which is exactly as if one were to add: “But this attack was at once parried by a magnificent *coup droit*.” Then in Lever there are countless absurdities about duels, both with duelling-sword and sabre ; and one of the best known occurs in the account of Tom Burke’s duel with François, the *maître d’armes*. The description of this is full of ridiculous details—the “grating of the blade with the peculiar motion which denotes attack ;” the “rigid firmness of the arm ;” the negligent “throwing open his guard” on François’s part—all these lead well up to the *maître d’armes* crying : *Que cela [il fallait dire ceci, soit dit en passant] finisse*, and delivering a desperate lunge in the chest, which Burke, suddenly stooping, catches in his back, when, by a sudden “wheel round,” he snaps François’s sword sharp off, while *at the same moment* he hits François with an almost fatal lunge. The thing, when it is not, as in the italicised words, absolutely impossible, is so extravagant that it may well have been founded on fact, as were many of Lever’s madcap stories in his “first manner.”

It is, however, of stage swordsmanship only that I am now asked to speak. And to go back to the beginning, might not some commentator who, like the egregious Mr. Ignatius Donnelly with his great cryptogram, goes about to recover the wind of a comma or a semi-colon, trace plausibly the descent of the old “combat-sword” from the short Roman sword, and its use in the gladiatorial games ? There is not so much difference in length, and the cuts and guards with the ancient sword cannot have been very much more complicated than the

“one, two, three under, one, two, three over, sixes, robbers’ cuts,” and so on, which were an unfailing draw temp. Crummles, and were elaborately described by Albert Smith in one of his best novels, *The Scattergood Family*. True, the Roman sword was a shrewd weapon of offence with the point, and in the fight between the British sailor and seemingly-overpowering odds, the only thrust given with the non-existent point was that which was delivered between the arm and the body to make an end at last of the principal villain. The combat-sword, alack, is dead in almost all London theatres. It survived for a time in various burlesques, at the Olympic, for instance, in Robson’s days, and later yet; and it may very likely drag on an existence in some outlying and country theatres, though these last are generally nowadays given up to touring companies with the latest modern improvements in staging at their fingers’ ends. Yet only last year I saw a very good survival of the old “combat-sword” business in a provincial performance of *Richard III*. The principal part was played by an actor who has a great following in certain country districts, and who deserves it if intense energy entirely misplaced is a thing of desert. He had a great resemblance to Mr. Wopsle (though it is not on record that Mr. Wopsle played Richard). He mouthed, he strutted, he shrugged, he put the emphasis with untiring energy on all the wrong words, and he took the stage so vigorously that it was a wonder he did not take the orchestra and the auditorium as well. For all this, however, he made up in the final fight. The weapons, to be sure, were not “combat-swords,” they were to appearance ordinary stage-swords; but, to quote Mr. Alfred Thompson’s parody concerning the minstrel, they must have been “infernal strong.” The combat was conducted with all the simplicity and vigour of the fearless old fashion, and really it was a thrilling fight. One could not, in the glare of the footlights, discern whether the combatants succeeded in carrying out Crummles’s advice to strike sparks from the swords, but it seems probable that they did, and the curtain, to use the delightful old phrase, “fell amidst tempests of applause.”

All that is changed in first-rate London theatres, and at many such theatres swordsmanship receives the close and scholarly attention which is, from every point of view, its proper meed. There is yet more to be done in various ways, to which I propose presently to call attention; but I should like first to remark on certain things which are more obvious. And, chief among these is the careless and highly-dangerous use of unbated weapons on the stage. No doubt this has been minimised in con-

sequence of various serious accidents ; but he would be a sanguine man who should suppose that it has been absolutely and everywhere suppressed. A man who in a *salle d'armes*, playing with "blunts," neglected the precaution of jacket and mask, would be voted a madman, and he would assuredly find no one to fence with him. Be it remembered that even these defences are not infallible, since a foil broken short off may give a very nasty scratch, if nothing worse, with the jagged end of the *forte*, since the attacking fencer cannot possibly stop the impetus of his lunge, and that the lightest practice sabre may find its way through the meshes of an ordinary mask to the mouth, cheek, or eye. (The moral of this last-named accident is "never attempt sabre-play, however light, without a sabre-mask.") But such chances, and really serious accidents in the fencing-school are very very few and far between, are literally nothing compared to the risk run by actors who, whether from their own carelessness or the property-man's, or the stage-manager's, find themselves engaged in a fight with "sharps." Many an old playgoer must remember how Fechter, in the last scene of *The Duke's Motto*, pinked the villain (was it not Jordan who played the part, or was it Vining ?) ; and the dangerous wound which Mr. Charles Warner received from a sharp dagger in one of his best melodramatic parts is a more recent event. Again, to go further back, it is on record that Charles Mathews, playing Roderigo in Macready's company (what an odd performance it must have been !) and lying as dead on the stage, was painfully prodded by the point of Iago's (Phelps's) sword. So that Mr. Lenville, in *Nicholas Nickleby*, might, had he possessed the requisite courage, have carried out his intention, avowed to Mr. Folair, of really "pinkings" Nicholas, unless, that is, the Crumles company adopted the practice, still common among even well-reputed travelling companies, of conducting sword-duels on the stage with ordinary fencing foils, instead of with "practice" duelling-swords, the "black rapiers," or "spadi neri" of Elizabethan times. (These, by-the-bye, were doubtless so called because, at that period, to save the trouble of constant cleaning and polishing, the blades were covered from hilt to point with a coating of black varnish.)

The duel with foils on the stage calls to mind another absurdity, which I have never seen attempted on the stage, but which occurs so constantly in novels, and novels by people who ought to be more careful, that it must surely have found its way to the stage. I refer, of course, to the time-worn novel scene in which two people thirsting for each other's blood *break the buttons off a pair of foils*, and so turn them into deadly weapons. Now the



construction of a foil is such that for "to break the buttons off the foils was the work of a minute," it is necessary to read "to remove the chamois-leather or caoutchouc covering the end of the foil's *faible*, thus exposing the flat steel button which is part of the foil itself, was not a very long business in itself. But it was long enough to give the would-be combatants pause. They reflected that to file off the flat steel ends would make a good deal of noise, and that their deadly purpose might possibly be interrupted even if they could get hold of a file without attracting attention. They further perceived that under the most favourable conditions it would be so long and tedious a business that before it was over their courage might ooze out at the ends of their fingers. Therefore, with friendly prudence, they shook hands and went each his own way." That is what would really happen. The villain of a novel or a play might indeed attain his base design, if he had plotted it for a long time, by having a pair of foils or duelling-swords so arranged that—but this is too valuable a suggestion: I must keep it for my own use. The business of the final scene in *The Corsican Brothers* is, when you come to think of it in cold blood, no less absurd, since it is both physically and morally impossible for two men each to snap his sword in twain (a difficult and dangerous feat at best except with a "trick" sword) at exactly the same distance from the hilt. However, the swing of the action and the acting carry it away here, and a really good playgoer will be not one whit the less thrilled because he not only knows but actually sees how the change of swords is effected.

This business in *The Corsican Brothers* leads up to another matter. The only actors I have seen in the double parts are the late Mr. Fechter (he always liked to be called Mr., having been born in London) and the present Sir Henry Irving. Fechter, although I remember every intonation of his voice, and every movement of his eloquent hands, I saw in this part, "when that I was and a little tiny boy," and was only too content to accept all stage marvels, just as I accepted Mme. D'Aulnoy's fairy stories. Therefore, I do not know if Fechter was as wise as Henry Irving in having the swords made, for stage effect, considerably broader and heavier than the true duelling-sword. I am fortunate enough to possess one of them, and I have often compared it with the duelling sword, as to which there is no doubt that its beautiful proportions would make a comparatively poor show in the glamour of the lights. So again in a different kind Henry Irving exhibited his matchless grasp of detail as well as of breadth in the fencing scene in *Hamlet*. What does Sir Henry Irving? The weapons are once expressly described as *foils*. The

manager, foreseeing that ordinary foils would be ineffective, has duelling-swords, slightly reduced this time instead of very perceptibly increased in bulk of blade, fitted with hilts appropriate to the imaginary period. The audience is not a bit the wiser, except in this, that it sees the flashing of the steel and every movement of the blades instead of gazing with empty eagerness at what would with the usual foils look like an assault with hair-pins. As it was, the whole thing, from the suggestion of the *mur* to the "scuffle," went smoothly and swiftly and to well-deserved applause. The late Edmund Leathes was, if I remember rightly, Henry Irving's earliest Laertes, and though hopelessly bewildered by loose play in a *salle d'armes*, he was as effective a stage-fencer as he was a pleasant companion. In this matter of fencing, I believe, he differed entirely from the Hamlet to whom he played Laertes. I have never been fortunate enough to fence with Sir Henry Irving, or even to see him fence in private; but I have often been assured that in a fencing-room, as on the stage, he is full of grace, knowledge, and vigour.

The great actor-manager's most ingenious device about the "foils" in *Hamlet* should have been remembered by those responsible for the staging of *The Swordsman's Daughter* at the Adelphi, in which the serious fencing-scene (fortunately preceded by the humours of Mr. Harry Nicholls) went for literally nothing. I could not, if I would, tell my readers in what class of fencing-masters or fencers *ces messieurs* who were expressly engaged ought to be classed, for the very simple reason that it was impossible for anyone, even in a near row of stalls, to follow the phrases of the assault with any certainty. It is hard enough in full daylight at the Agricultural Hall to make out, from the nearest boxes, anything whatever of pure fencing movements; at the Adelphi there was the glare of the footlights as well, and for all practical purposes one might as well have been looking at the celebrated duel of the Performing Fleas. Again, it was a ludicrous blunder, though of a different kind, to introduce an exaggerated caricature of San Malato; for who, in England, except the comparatively small circle of keen fencers who are always posted in Parisian and other foreign fencing, ever heard of San Malato and his *excentricités voulues*? But, still to talk of our greatest actor, it is to be noted that he is good at all weapons that rank as *armes blanches*. His fight at the end of *Macbeth* is so well managed that it conveys the notion of a growing recklessness in the last stress, as it were, of a courage driven to despair by Macduff's fatal announcement. He seems to strike wildly as one in whom only the desire to strike, while he has yet strength to wield a sword, is left. And yet I should

be astonished to find that the whole fight was not carefully planned, and was, indeed, as far removed as possible from the celebrated hammer-and-tongs in which Macready as Macbeth banged away anyhow with good round oaths at Phelps as Macduff, and was surprised at being paid in his own coin. The *Macbeth* combat, however, gives no more scope to the more exquisite and finer kind of swordsmanship than does the final contest in *Richard III.* Nor, as may be inferred from what has been said of *The Corsican Brothers*, is the fight there of the more difficult kind. To make it effective both to an expert and a lay audience a man must be, like Henry Irving, a good swordsman; but it is, after all, in its component phrases, as simple as it can be made showy. What was really difficult, and, therefore, exhibited the actor at his best as a swordsman, was the duel (fought with spadrons) between Landry and the Abbé Latour in *The Dead Heart*. This from the beginning, when an extraordinarily swift and agile movement was needed on Landry's (Irving's) part to parry the traitor lunge of Latour, to the end, when, as he first played it (and I wish he had not altered it), he killed Latour with the rare manoeuvre of a backward lunge, the left foot moving back while the right remains moveless, and the body sinks for an upward lunge in tierce beneath the adversary's blade—all this, I say, was as noble swordsmanship as could witch an audience. Nor must Mr. Bancroft's really excellent sword-play on this occasion be left without a word of high praise. He played the Abbé Latour throughout with the finest sense of the thoroughly high-bred scoundrel of the period, and his performance in the duel was the more remarkable because (there can be no harm in saying it now) it was years since he had taken up a foil or a sword. There was yet another remarkable point which applied to both actors. Neither of them, as is well known, can see clearly without glasses, and yet, many times as I saw the play, I can remember only one occasion on which the two blades, in this somewhat complicated fight, missed each other and passed ineffectual through the air. This, to those who knew the circumstances, was a triumph over the difficulties kindly provided by Nature, who, according to a great *medico* celebrated in one of Mr. James Payn's delightful stories, will, if she is left to herself, do her utmost to kill you.

Before going on to the improvements for which I venture to see room in the arrangement of stage swordsmanship, one may pause to consider with satisfaction that both fencing and dancing are nowadays part of any keen actor's equipment. In the times when every gentleman wore a sword, every distinguished actor knew, of course, how to use it, *teste* Quin and others. But then came



a transition period after the sword had ceased to be a necessary adjunct of dress. Thus Edmund Kean was, in his generation, like his son in the next, renowned for his fencing, and, as far as one can make out, it was, as late as the days of Mr. John Coleman, who played many parts with many great actors of a time earlier than his own, rather exceptional for an actor to be an accomplished swordsman. This, as I have said, is changed, and the change is all for the good, as swordsmanship is a liberal education both for body and mind. Yet I can call to mind only one actor of the immediate present, Mr. Charles Brookfield, who (in a version of *Le Réveil du Lion*) has made a distinct feature of his fencing, and remarkably well he did it. Here the difficulty about the ordinary foil, not being a showy stage weapon was ingeniously avoided, partly by the fact that every hit given by the rejuvenated old gentleman was not only claimed, but either left, or gave the quiddity of leaving, a chalk-mark on the adversary's coat or waistcoat.

And now to the improvements which I should like to see carried out. For one thing, every duel of comparatively modern times should be done according to art and custom. Thus, in *The Corsican Brothers*, when there is a second on each side, one of the seconds should go through the by no means tedious business of supporting the swords with his walking-cane until he feels sure that the distance is right, and that the men may fall on guard. There is another more important thing. I refer to the use of rapier and dagger, or its partial substitute, rapier, with the gloved left-hand used for parrying (*the main gauche* dagger could, of course, be used on occasion for offence as well as for defence). Now, Shakspeare as an Elizabethan knew no usual form of sword-duel except that in which both hands bore each its part. The capital passage to prove this is found in Benvolio's description of Tybalt's fight with Mercutio. He tells how Mercutio,

“With one hand beats  
Cold death aside, and with the other sends  
It back to Tybalt.”

There is no room for doubt here. There could not be a more accurate description of the methods of rapier and dagger, and Mr. Forbes Robertson lost a most excellent chance when, in his production of *Romeo and Juliet*, instead of acting on this very plain direction, he allowed the conventional grinding and clashing of swords which were too obviously mere stage toys, while the left hands of the combatants were left to their own sweet will. Again, in spite of the seeming confusion between rapiers and foils in *Hamlet*, the only possible way, as has been amply proved by experiment, of making the change of weapons natural is attained

by using the rapier and dagger to which Osric refers. This I commend most strenuously to Sir Henry Irving first, and after to all whom it may concern. Twice I have seen a rapier-and-dagger fight admirably done on the stage, once by George Vining and another, in *The Huguenot Captain*, once by, I think, Capoul and a baritone, whose name I disremember, in Gounod's *Faust*. So good an example should have been followed, and ought to be followed now, especially as it was repeated, with improvements, very recently. This was when that most accomplished swordsman, Captain Hutton, my old friend and oft friendly opponent at many weapons, took charge of the fighting scenes in the *Romeo and Juliet* matinée at the Prince of Wales's Theatre. The thing was, of course, admirably managed. The serving-men naturally fought with the sword and buckler; Tybalt and Benvolio with the "syngle sword" of Silver's time, the combat being finished by one of Silver's "gryps" of the sword.

Tybalt and Mercutio fought each with a "case of rapiers," that is, a pair of comparatively short rapiers worn in one scabbard, the left-hand one taking the place of the *main gauche*. Romeo met Tybalt's case of rapiers with rapier and dagger, and employed the "under stop-thrust," practically identical (save that the Elizabethans did not lunge) with the backward lunge above mentioned. Romeo and Paris fought with rapier and dagger, and Romeo, dropping his rapier to overpower Paris's left hand, finished the adversary with his dagger. A better devised series of stage-fights, whether for spirit, ingenuity, or accuracy, than Captain Hutton furnished forth, would be difficult indeed to find.

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## FEMALE COMEDY WRITERS.

BY HENRY ELLIOTT.

ON April 9th, 1896, the day after the production in London of Miss Clo Graves's farcical comedy, *A Mother of Three*, the *Daily Telegraph* came out with an extraordinary statement. "Thanks to Miss Clo Graves," it said, "the last of all the reproaches has fallen from delightful woman. We give her credit for every virtue; but when it comes to humour the sceptical man is inclined to shake his head. Everyone of experience has met with a witty woman, but hitherto the humour has been confined to conversation, novels, or correspondence. Lady farce-writers may be said to be a novelty, but Miss Clo Graves starts another future for clever women."

"Lady farce-writers may be said to be a novelty!" What next, and next? Why, at the very moment that the *Daily Telegraph* published these wild and whirling sentences, *Jedbury*

*Junior*, the product of Mrs. J. H. Ryley, was rousing the laughter of delighted audiences, audiences which found in it a very considerable measure of that humour which (according to the *Daily Telegraph*) was first brought on to the stage and across the footlights in *A Mother of Three* ! It is almost incredible that any writer on theatrical subjects should have been guilty of the passage we have quoted above. The very name of Miss Graves herself ought to have warned him against the assertions made in it. Miss Graves, though best known as the author of a very serious drama called *Nitocris*, collaborated some years ago with Mr. Yorke Stephens in adapting from the German of Von Moser a farce to which the authors gave the name of *The Skeleton*. That piece did not live, but at least it ought to have prepared the observer of theatrical affairs for any diversion in the direction of stage humour in which Miss Graves might afterwards indulge.

But if the *Daily Telegraph* had forgotten *Jedbury Junior* and *The Skeleton*, there were other obvious and recent examples of feminine humour which it ought surely to have recollected. Was it not a matter of common knowledge that a lady masquerading as "Charles Marlowe" had collaborated with Mr. Robert Buchanan in the composition of the farce called *The Strange Adventures of Miss Brown*, just as she has since done in the case of the comedy called *The Romance of the Shopwalker* ? Moreover, did not Miss Harriett Jay long ago collaborate with Mr. Buchanan in the comedy called *Fascination* ? Was it not only the other day that Mrs. Hugh Bell made us all laugh heartily at the Comedy at the comic complications in a little piece called *The Bicycle*, a piece in which Mr. Charles Hawtrey and Miss Vane Featherston were agreeably diverting ? Did not Mrs. W. K. Clifford put before us, on the same occasion, a playlet half-humorous, half-tragic, dealing with the gradual disillusionment of a young wife ? Mrs. Hugh Bell, it may be remarked, has done much in the way of farce and comedy writing. One remembers, in particular, a very entertaining little duologue of hers, called *An Underground Journey*, in which, if I mistake not, Miss Lottie Venne was very droll. One remembers, too, her *Jerry-Builder Solness*, a travesty of Ibsen's *Master-Builder*, sufficient in itself to show that woman is able to compass not only comedy and farce, but even burlesque itself.

But, in truth, the list of feminine stage-humorists grows under one's pen. How came the *Daily Telegraph* to ignore that very clever bit of ingenuity, that side-splitting combination of misunderstandings, *Tom, Dick, and Harry*, produced at the Trafalgar some little time ago ? It was the work of a Mrs. Pacheco, an American writer (I believe), who had no doubt read the *Comedy*



of *Errors*, and determined to "go one better." It was a triumph of mystification, and would probably have had a very much longer run had there not been in it some disagreeable elements. This was in 1893, the year in which Lady Colin Campbell came to the front with her humorous dramatic satire called *Bud and Blossom*, the year in which Miss Florence Warden brought out at the same theatre a comedy entitled *Uncle Mike*. It seems only the other day that Lady Greville adapted to the English boards *Le Gendre de Monsieur Poirier*, putting into the composition, I take it, some humour of her own—humour of which she had given signs previously in one or two other stage inventions. Was it not she whose farce called *Baby* was performed at Terry's? Was there not humour in the *petite comédie* which Mrs. Craigie wrote with Mr. George Moore, and in which Miss Ellen Terry has appeared on both sides of the Atlantic? I fancy there was some, though not much, perhaps, in the *Mrs. Lessingham* of that other playwright-novelist, George Fleming, as well as in the *Thyrza Fleming* of Miss Dorothy Leighton.

"Lady farce-writers may be said to be a novelty." Indeed! It is just seven years since Mrs. Musgrave produced her very diverting piece, *Our Flat*, which was one of the most conspicuous successes of the past decade. How came the *Daily Telegraph* to forget *that*? If ever a piece was remarkable for humorous conception and detail it was surely *Our Flat*, which deserves to live, if only on account of its comic portraits of the slavey and the theatrical manager. *Cerise and Co.*, by the same author, did not "catch on," but it also had many points of cleverness. Then, was there no humour in the *Tommy*, the *Punch and Judy*, of Mrs. E. S. Willard? Surely there was plenty of it. One recalls, also, the *Matrimonial Agency* of Miss Charlotte Morland, the *No Credit* of Miss Emily Coffin, the *Lessons in Harmony* (twenty years ago) of Miss Linda Dietz. One remembers that Lady Monckton wrote the bright libretto of a musical piece called *Tobacco Jars*, and that Miss Kate Santley is responsible for the book of a comic opera named *Vetah*. Miss Catherine Lewis, the comédienne, worked with her husband at a farce entitled *My Missis*; and how often the *Daily Telegraph* has commended those farcical comedies, *The Butler* and *The Don*, in which Mr. Merivale avowedly had the assistance of his able wife!

So far, all my examples have been drawn from living writers, whose work, one would have thought, would have been fresh in the memory of the *Daily Telegraph*. If we go a little farther back we find Madame Selina Dolaro penning a society comedy called *In the Fashion*; we find Miss Victoria Vokes producing the extravaganza named *In Camp*; we find Mrs. Chippendale

turning out a piece entitled *Mamma*. The difficulty is to know where to draw the line. Where shall the list end? We have just had a new biography of Sheridan. Well, it reminds us that his granddaughter, Lady Dufferin, was the author of *Finesse*, a comedy which has lately been printed, and in which we come across much that is truly humorous in idea and in expression. We are further reminded that Sheridan unquestionably obtained many hints for his comedies from the brilliant humorous work of his mother, Frances Sheridan, whose *Discovery* and whose *Dupe* both had considerable vogue in their day. "Lady farce-writers may be said to be a novelty!" Why, Sheridan's sister wrote a farce, *The Ambiguous Lover*, which was acted over a hundred years ago. Who, again, produced *Appearances Against Them*, *The Widow's Vow*, *Animal Magnetism*, *The Hue and Cry*, *Young Men and Old Women*, every one of them unmitigated farces? Why, a lady of course—Mrs. Inchbald to wit, who, could she revisit the glimpses of the moon, would be very much surprised to hear from the *Daily Telegraph* that "lady farce-writers may be said to be a novelty."

However, we need not dwell too long upon what must, of course, have been but a temporary confusion of mind. When the writer of the above-quoted sentences opened his *Daily Telegraph* next morning, he must at once have realised the nature of the blunder made. Even a daily-newspaper critic must know, or once have known, that there have been female comedy-writers from the days of Aphra Behn downwards. Aphra was fertile in farce-work; the famous Duchess of Newcastle was also bounteous in what she called comedies. Many people have seen *The Wonder*; some have seen or read *The Busybody*; some have seen or read *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*; and a large proportion of these must be aware that they were all the handiwork of a certain Mrs. Centlivre. Then, did not Sophia Lee write *The Chapter of Accidents* and *The Assiguation*? Was there not a Mrs. Pix who produced *The Deceiver Deceived*, *Adventures in Madrid*, and what not? One finds comedies ascribed to Mrs. Manley, and Mrs. Lennox, and Mrs. Cockburn, and Lady Wallace, and many another worthy dame of another time. Miss Clo Graves the pioneer of feminine farce-writing, the first of the female theatrical humorists? Why, she would be the first to repudiate the description, for she is a woman of culture, and is doubtless well acquainted with English stage history and literature. Nay, consciously or unconsciously, she probably owes something to her feminine predecessors in dramatic work.

Whether the appearance of women in the dramatic field is or

is not to be welcomed is a different matter. On the whole, I should say it is to be desired. It is interesting to note the feminine point of view in drama as in other things; we do not want to look at everything always through masculine eyes. We see plenty of men's men and men's women; let us now see more of women's men and women's women. Women flourish in the world of fiction; why not in the world of the stage? If, during the present generation, they have produced no masterpieces, that is probably because they have not had the requisite opportunities for learning their business. I have been told that *Our Flat*, before it was "stage-managed," was a somewhat straggling piece. There can be no doubt that lady comedy-writers have yet to learn the value of symmetry and conciseness—conciseness of dialogue, symmetry of dramatic form. They have also to discover the importance of harmony in motives and details; they are apt to place the incongruous too often in juxtaposition. Their work, again, is inclined to be thin in texture. One saw that in *A Mother of Three*; one saw it also in *A Matchmaker*, which was sadly lacking in backbone, and had, accordingly, but a brief career. No; lady farce-writers cannot "be said to be a novelty," but it can and must be said of them that they have faults and that they need more practice. *Jedbury Junior* went very near to being a good as well as pretty and amusing piece; it was sufficient in itself to induce us to bid the female comedy-writers to go on and prosper.

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### THE REAL SHERIDAN.

BY H. A. MILTON.

“IF Sheridan could be made acquainted with all the stories written about him, he would find in them material for a farce as pungent and lively, as brilliant and comical, as *The Critic*.” Such are the words with which Mr. Fraser Rae, almost at the end of his recent book about him, begins his estimate of the verdict passed by posterity upon a man whom the English people have never yet taken the trouble to understand. A severe task, I will call the preparation of these two notable volumes. Although its severity must have been tempered to a great extent by the author's keen interest in his subject, upon which he is a recognised (now, indeed, *the* recognised) authority, yet it is impossible to read the book without reflecting upon the magnitude of his labours, or upon the debt which all lovers of truth



must ever owe him. For Mr. Rae's object throughout has been to present Sheridan as he actually was, to sweep away the mossy growth of fiction which has attached itself to the main stem and to all the branches of his singularly brilliant career, to destroy the popular conception, and to substitute for it an accurate, impartial portrait, tempered only "by that benevolence of treatment of which the most blameless stand in need."

Few men have hitherto been more unfortunate in their biographer, than Richard Brinsley Sheridan. Lord Dufferin, in his graceful and interesting introduction, speaks justly of Dr. Watkins's work as "a piece of bookmaking of the worst type." Moore's *Life* ought to have been very much better than it is, since he had Sheridan's papers entrusted to him, and professed to have been his friend. But he tired of his work before it was finished, and was content to use any materials, however untrustworthy, that came to hand, while he wrote the concluding part of it, at any rate, in a spirit far removed from that of friendship. Yet, until now, it is upon Moore that later writers have had mainly to rely for what they fondly imagined to be the facts of Sheridan's life.

The popular conception of the author of *The School for Scandal* is summed up in perhaps half-a-dozen anecdotes (entirely apocryphal in all probability), of which the following may serve as an example. "Sheridan, being once in a rage with his son, exclaimed angrily that he would have no more to do with him, that he cut him off with a shilling. Without a moment's hesitation, young Sheridan asked his father to give him the shilling at once, but the latter, putting his hand into his pocket, was chagrined to find that it was in its usual state of utter emptiness, and the son, who had no doubt counted upon this, enjoyed his father's embarrassment until the hearty laughter of both put an end to their temporary estrangement." It is to such japes as this that Mr. Rae is alluding when he says that "those who desire to learn what Sheridan neither did nor uttered will have their curiosity gratified by turning to a recent edition of *Joe Miller* and to *Sheridania*!" Many such tales were extant even during Sheridan's lifetime. Sir Richard Phillips had once to transact certain business with him, but expressed his unwillingness to do so by letter, as he had heard that Sheridan never opened or read his correspondence. Sheridan at once characterised this as "an infernal lie," which, as a general statement, it no doubt was; though it was not altogether without foundation, for even his wife once warned her sister-in-law against intrusting notes to "poor Dick," who "hardly ever reads his own letters, so that if ever a letter of mine finds its way into his pocket unopened, it

might as well be in the bottomless pit for any good I am ever like to reap by it." Sir Richard Phillips at this same interview was also indiscreet enough to mention the popular belief that Sheridan "never rose till evening," an obviously wild exaggeration, considering the amount of work he used to get through. Sheridan himself declared that "his life had been made miserable by calumnies, tales, and stories of one kind and another." While it cannot perhaps be wondered that a large crop of legends found their way first into circulation and then into print, yet we may fairly be surprised that no authentic record of Sheridan's life has been given to the world until eighty years have elapsed since his death. Not even his last hours have been free from misrepresentation and calumny. The fictions which declared that he died "on a truckle-bed in an attic," that he was in need of the necessities of life, and that the Prince Regent had to send money for his relief, have appealed to the imaginations of those who delighted in regarding his life as "dramatic," and thought this a fitting end to a meteor-like career. But once and for all time they have now been "nailed to the counter," and if George IV. and Croker, the one despicable, the other wilfully or grovellingly credulous, have access in their present habitations to a circulating library, they cannot but writhe when they see how the lying story they gave the world between them has been effectually disposed of.

Yet, while we wonder that Sheridan should have been so long and so persistently misrepresented, the cause is not, after all, so very difficult to perceive. Lord Dufferin attributes much of his great-grandfather's ill-fortune to his poverty and his Irish origin. "Sober English common-sense," he says, "has always been suspicious of impecunious brilliancy in public men." But there is yet another and an even stronger reason for the readiness that has been shown to believe, both during his life and since his death, any story tending to discredit Sheridan, or to place him in a ridiculous light. That a writer of plays—of comic plays, to make the matter worse—should be also a hardworking member of Parliament, and one of the greatest orators who ever addressed the House of Commons on matters of public importance, was an anomaly that the British public could not stomach without severe mental indigestion. That the manager of a theatre should be raised to the dignity of great offices of State, and should discharge the duties attaching to them with assiduous merit, was such a shock to public opinion that public opinion has never really recovered from it. More than his poverty, more than his Irish nature, more than his practical joking, far more than his conviviality and vinous indiscretions, it was Sheridan's versatility that has always

prevented him from being taken quite seriously by the millions who represent the solid, stolid, often stupid, but, nevertheless, useful, quality for which Carlyle had to coin the term "gig-respectability." The British public does not like its public men to have too many claims to admiration. It likes to affix upon each a label denoting his particular rank or talent, and it shows great displeasure, which generally takes the form of belief in disparaging anecdote, and an attitude of half-contemptuous, half-amused distrust, when a man transgresses the limits set by his label, and wanders into a province of thought or action where it neither expects nor wishes to find him. *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*, says gig-respectability. Let a man stick to one thing, and not upset all our notions of what is proper and right.

Sheridan, in point of fact, has suffered less for his failings than for the advantages which nature bestowed upon him—his adaptability, his quick, ready wit. He has been blamed not so much for his faults as for what really were his excellences. His failings were many enough, it is true. It must not be supposed that Mr. Fraser Rae has gone in for "whitewashing," to use a cant phrase of the day. But, after all, his character, though far from perfect, compares not unfavourably with those of many among his contemporaries, and it was not his poverty so much as his improvidence that raised up detractors against him. It is too much to expect that the popular conception of the man will change all at once. Mr. Rae's researches will, nevertheless, do their work by degrees, and, though it may be some time before the unliterary public accepts the new portrait as the true one, there will be no excuse in future for any man of letters who shall attempt to give fresh currency to the old, false legends which have obtained credence for so long. We may hope, for instance, to have heard the last of the fable that Sheridan's plays were written *currente calamo*, always in haste and without revision. Mr. Rae shows conclusively that Sheridan was, on the other hand, "an unsparing critic of himself, having a most fastidious taste, and an almost unapproachable ideal in his mind. He wrote and recast many a passage in the comedy *The School for Scandal* before allowing it to pass from him;" and it was characteristic of the man to write at the bottom of the concluding sheet "Finished at last. Thank God! R. B. Sheridan." The foolish story that the actors were kept waiting for their parts while scene after scene was dashed off is thus finally disposed of. A writer who could bring himself to do work in this fashion would never have put off for nineteen years a publisher who offered him 500 guineas for a corrected copy of *The School for Scandal* on the plea that he never could satisfy himself as to the



version he would like to publish. Among Mr. Rae's interesting finds are two acts of this play (which Sir Henry Irving, in his little note on Sheridan's characteristics as a dramatist, calls "still the most popular comedy in the English language") prepared for the enterprising publisher, but never given to him. "Though the changes are few, they are all characteristic, and they testify to Sheridan's artistic striving after finish in expression. He did not neglect even the stage directions, and he improved them in every case." Mr. Rae, by the way, must be curiously unfamiliar with acting versions of plays if he is not acquainted with the common stage direction which refers to characters being "discovered" at the rise of the curtain. We are glad to note that he "purposes printing the revised version of the comedy," which will be a welcome addition to theatrical libraries. The ridiculous story that the plot was plagiarised by Sheridan from a work submitted to him by "a young lady, the daughter of a merchant in Thames Street," now fails to obtain any credence, but Mr. Rae does not notice the various sources from which incidents seem to have been borrowed, only, it may be admitted, to be improved beyond all knowledge, and sent forth into the world with the impress upon them of the genius which their original inventors lacked. Besides Sir Henry Irving's "note" already mentioned, Mr. Bancroft contributes to the chapter on "Sheridan as a Dramatist" some remarks on the performances of *The School for Scandal* and *The Rivals* at the old Prince of Wales's Theatre, while elsewhere Mr. Sutherland Edwards criticises *The Duenna* from the scholarly musician's point of view. To readers of *The Theatre*, this chapter will be one of the most interesting in the book, though all who wish to know the real as opposed to the false Sheridan ought to read the volumes from beginning to end. Portions of the matter included may seem superfluous, but all contribute in degree to the building up of the picture.

Some, it may be, will complain that the new Sheridan is not so attractive as the old; that the idea of the dramatist-politician as a harum-scarum fellow, more often drunk than sober, in debt all round, and with no more regard for principle or sincerity than the hero of a Restoration farce, affords more entertainment than this amended presentment of a hard-working member of Parliament and justly-respected official of State, a painstaking writer, a loving husband and father, given to occasional lapses, it is true, but forced to take life seriously and to strain every nerve to keep head above water. Witty he was and flippant on occasion; unbusinesslike he was, and unfitted to control a great commercial enterprise (as he showed, to take but one instance, when affection led him to appoint his father

manager at Dury Lane); careless where money was concerned, and of that mercurial temperament which sometimes conceals from superficial observers the sterling qualities that lie beneath. But he was not a profligate; he was not a drunkard; he was very far from being unprincipled and insincere, as he has too often been called; he was never dishonourable in money matters, and, when he might have had for the asking large political emoluments, he preferred to keep his independence and to struggle on until the night came when he could work no more. It is pitiable to reflect that for so long a period he should have been misrepresented and belied. "Oh! for the rarity of human charity." Oh! for the scarcity of those who will rather give heed to praise than to blame, who will take the advice Sheridan himself once gave in the lines—

Believe not each aspersing tongue,  
As most weak persons do;  
But still believe that story wrong  
Which ought not to be true.

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## G. H. LEWES AS DRAMATIC CRITIC.

BY W. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

**B**Y unearthing from the columns of the long-defunct *Leader*, and reprinting with annotations, in a neat and handy form, a number of theatrical criticisms from the pen of George Henry Lewes, Messrs. W. Archer and R. W. Lowe have deserved well of lovers and students of the stage. In the same volume they reproduce certain utterances by the late John Forster, contributed to the *Examiner* in 1835-38, and including analyses of performances by Macready and Edwin Forrest. These also have interest and value, but by no means so much value and interest as attach to these articles by Lewes, originally printed in 1850-54. The classics of dramatic criticism are Charles Lamb, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, Henry Morley, and George Henry Lewes. Foremost among these, in point of sheer readability, I should place Hazlitt, with Lewes next to him, though *longo intervallo*. What first charms one in Lewes is his style. His book on *Actors and the Art of Acting*, published in 1875, has always been for the enthusiast and connoisseur a cherished possession, but I am not sure that these excerpts from the *Leader*; which Lewes himself left, so far as he was concerned, in the oblivion of periodical publication, are not even more delightful in some respects than the essays which Lewes collected and issued at the above-named date. They have incomparable freshness and *élan*. They were

penned between the writer's thirty-third and thirty-seventh year, and present him, perhaps, at his intellectual best. Before they were begun, he had published his *Biographical History of Philosophy*, his book on *The Spanish Drama*, and his novels called *Ranthorpe* and *Rose, Blanche, and Violet*. While the earliest were being written, he issued his *Life of Robespierre* and his tragedy of *The Noble Heart*. His *Life of Goethe*, his *Physiology of Common Life*, his *Aristotle*, his *Problems of Life and Mind*, were yet to come; but in 1850-54 he was in the full flush of his powers, and already the master of a style as easy and flexible as it was brilliant and vivacious.

No doubt he was fortunate in the circumstances in which he addressed the public. He was not cribbed, cabined, or confined by the daily editorial "we." He wrote, over a *nom de guerre*, in a weekly paper, and, apparently, was wholly uncontrolled by any external conditions. He was not obliged to adopt the "bow-wow" strain; he could give free rein to his individuality; he could say exactly what he thought, in his own way. The consequence is that what charms one most, after the litheness, the pointedness, of his literary weapon, is the absolute independence of his view and tone. There is no bowing-down to established reputations, no bending of the knee to conventional ideals. Whatever else Lewes may have done, he certainly thought for himself; he was never intimidated by tradition. He does not hesitate to tilt even at the sacred shield of Shakspeare. In 1851, he wrote in the *Leader*: "I have always considered *The Merry Wives* one of the worst plays, if not altogether the worst, that Shakspeare has left us. The wit for the most part is dreary or foolish; the tone is coarse and farcical; and the characters want the fine distinctive touches he so well knew how to give. If some luckless wight had written such a comedy in our time, I should like to see what the critics would say to it. I know what *one* would say. But, of course, protected as it is by the reverence all Englishmen feel for the 'Swan,' critics leave it in peace." And again, later, of one of the historical dramas: "Although *King John* contains some truly Shakspearean writing, and characters such as Faulconbridge, Hubert, Arthur, Constance, and King John, the effect, on the whole, is very heavy, and the play needs some necessary attraction. Gervinus, indeed, thinks it a 'tragedy of the purest water'; but he is a German, and accustomed to watery dramas; our audiences want something of a more riveting interest." Equally frank was Lewes's comment upon the old English dramatists as inspirers of the modern playwright: "We venture to say that more detestable models were never held up before a student's reverence. . . Whoever has more



than a second-hand acquaintance with Kyd, Peele, Marlowe, Webster, Dekker, Ford, Marston, Chapman, Heywood, Middleton, Shirley, Cyril Tourneur, and the rest, will probably agree with us that their plays are as poor in construction (artistic as well as theatric) as they are resplendent in imagery and weighty lines—that their characters are *sketched* rather than *developed*—that their situations for the most part are violent, horrible, and clumsily prepared.” Of *The Duchess of Malfi*, in particular, Lewes said plainly and bluntly that it “is a nightmare, not a tragedy.”

There had been independent critics before Lewes, as there have been independent critics since; but Lewes's great and distinguishing merit was that his outspokenness was based upon knowledge, thought, and conviction. He was a man of wide culture; he had been a profound student of Continental as well as of English drama; he had been a careful observer of acting at home and abroad; he had been an actor himself. He can give reasons for his judgments. Thus, of the Sir Toby Balch of Addison, he complains that the actor “had not seized the part”: “Sir Toby should be saturated with good liquor . . . the eye should wander in its uncertainty, the tongue move heavily, the gait be lax. . . . Mr. Addison was the soberest of men. His stagger had no heaviness, his manner had nothing vinous.” Elsewhere Lewes objects to the Shylock of Macready that in his single scene with his daughter he shows no affection for her: “We must not keep Shylock's humanity out of view. He loves the memory of his lost Leah; he loves Jessica. . . . To omit the paternal tenderness is to alter profoundly the tragic structure of the play; for observe, if Shylock is a savage, bloodthirsty wretch, the whole moral is lost; if his fierceness is *natural* to him, and not brought out by the wrongs of the Christians, all the noble philosophy of the piece is destroyed.” Lewes, it is clear, would have been a keen admirer of the Shylock of Sir Henry Irving. As a dramatic critic, Lewes possessed the advantage of having a reasoned and definite conception of what acting ought to be. Many will remember his remarks “On Natural Acting” in the volume of 1875. We find the same ideas propounded in these *Leader* articles:—“The majority mistakes Art for an *imitation* of Nature. It is no such thing. Art is *representation*. . . . The test of an actor's genius is not ‘fidelity to Nature,’ but simply and purely his power of exciting emotions in you respondent to the situation—ideal when that is ideal, passionate when that is passionate, familiar when that is familiar, prosaic when that is prosaic. . . . To play a part naturally you must not drag it down to *your* nature, but project yourself into the nature of the character represented. . . . A

woman may wring her hands and redden her nose with grief, which would be *natural* enough in the back kitchen, but this nature cannot be accepted as the expression of Cordelia's agony." In these and other passages Lewes shows that he has grasped the philosophy of acting; that he is no mere spouter of *ipse-dixits*, no mere purveyor of personal opinion, but has grounds for the faith that is in him and for the critical sentences that he pronounces.

In the preface to the volume of 1875, Lewes said: "The critical pit, filled with playgoers who were familiar with fine acting, and had trained judgments, has disappeared. In its place there is a mass of amusement-seekers, not without a nucleus of intelligent spectators, but of this nucleus only a small minority has very accurate ideas of what constitutes good art." Alas, what was true of the playgoing world in 1875 is equally true of it in 1896. The number of theatre-lovers has increased largely with the years, but the proportion of mere amusement-seekers to those with "accurate ideas of what constitutes good art" remains, I should say, about the same. The latter are still very much in the minority. That being so, one cannot but be glad that these thoughtful and suggestive essays by Lewes should have been placed within easy reach of the playgoing public. *Actors and the Art of Acting* is, I believe, out of print, and not very readily obtainable even in second-hand form. Perhaps the owners of the copyright may be induced by-and-by to re-publish it in readily-accessible shape—a shape as suitable and acceptable as that which has lately been given to Morley's *Journal of a London Playgoer*. We have plenty of ardent theatre-lovers with a great capacity for enjoyment; but we want a larger body of educated judges, who have studied both the classical drama and the principles of acting as an art. There could be no more serviceable aids to such study than are supplied in the theatrical criticisms of George Henry Lewes—a scholar, a man of letters, a thoroughly well-equipped as well as fearless censor.

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## THE DRAMA IN SWEDEN.

BY A SWEDISH VICE-CONSUL IN ENGLAND.

**A**LTHOUGH the Swedish dramatic authors sometimes produce plays that might mean a fortune in England or France, their works are but rarely translated. It is true that last year brought two exceptions to the rule, but, curious to relate, this was in favour of plays that had been refused by the

Stockholm theatres, and which the authors had done into French for the Théâtre de l'Œuvre in Paris. English and French do not know Scandinavian adaptors, and Swedish writers have a difficulty in commanding a foreign language to such an extent as to enable them to execute such work. These have evidently been the reasons why many excellent Swedish pieces have not been produced outside the Swedish border.

The Norwegian plays of Ibsen were a long time in reaching London and Paris. They were, I believe, "boomed" for years in Copenhagen and Berlin before appearing in England or France. The Swedish theatres work under great difficulties, in consequence of the limited number of audiences, which, even in Stockholm, they have to play for. A play can be given only for a few nights' running—say a fortnight at the most—and may be revived for one or two nights in the following year if it has been well received at first. A dramatic author in Sweden cannot, therefore, obtain high remuneration for his work. The theatres, as a rule, buy the plays for a fixed sum, and thereby obtain the right to produce them for ever. It must be admitted that this is very favourable to the theatres when a play proves popular, particularly as the price paid is exceedingly small. There are indications now, however, that plays can have longer runs in Stockholm if changed with other plays at intervals. *Madame Sans-Gêne* had a run of over a hundred nights, and is still often revived. The time may be approaching when even Swedish managers will have to pay their percentage on the gross receipts. But, in order to procure this revolution, it would be necessary that French and English authors should combine and keep the object in view firmly before them.

French translations, particularly of M. Sardou's plays, have hitherto had the preference. Last year, however, the English farces were victorious. There, as everywhere, *Charley's Aunt*, *The New Boy*, and others, were played with great success; while the legitimate English drama, as represented by *The Manxman*, which had been ably translated and appeared at two of the chief theatres in Stockholm, was hopelessly rejected. The same fate overtook Miss Dorothy Leighton's interesting little play, *Thyrza Fleming*. But lately Mr. Pinero's plays have got to the front. *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* was produced with great effect recently, and had what for Sweden was an uncommonly long run of revivals. *The Benefit of the Doubt* is now being played on the principal stage in Stockholm, and the same theatre has acquired a translation of *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith*. Mr. Pinero gets no benefit at all from this, as he—unwisely, I think—has all his plays printed nearly at the same time as they are produced on the



stage, instead of a year or two afterwards. I think it is high time that steps should be taken for concluding a literary convention between England and Sweden.

In Sweden the great event of late has been the production of a very strong and striking play, *Sackia*, by the witty Gustav of Geijerstam. Its title does not tell much, but the piece itself is the more effective for that it is rather too realistic for those who prefer the tame and non-emotional. The dialogue is brilliant, and the dramatic situations are full of fun. It was so cleverly acted that the daring of some points in the dialogue was lost sight of. The play arouses the interest of the public from the first, and keeps it at high pressure to the last. I have no space here to enter into a full description of the work. I will only add that, although there is no "woman with a past" in it, the leading character is that of a lady who seems to possess the same mysterious touch of strange sympathetic emotion that denotes Mr. Pinero's leading lady characters, and makes them so powerful and captivating to all lovers of the drama. This play is now being adapted for the English stage by Mr. Oscar Oscarson Bearpow.

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"THE THEATRE," JUNE, 1896.



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MR. CHARLES WARNER & MISS GRACE WARNER.





## Portraits.

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### MR. CHARLES WARNER AND MISS WARNER.

NO bad critic of acting was Charles Reade, and when he spoke of the "art of keeping the stage alive," declaring that in this art Charles Warner "yielded to no living actor," he put his finger upon the quality which more than any other has contributed to Mr. Warner's success. It is true that the style of acting in which he specially excelled is nowadays somewhat out of fashion. A less "robustious" style obtains even in melodrama, and, as Mr. Warner has not cared to alter his method, he bulks less largely in the public view now than he did during the long period when he was in the front rank of stage favourites. He had been on the boards for eight years, having run away from home at an early age to join a travelling company, when, in 1875, he was given the part of Charles Middlewick in the amazingly successful *Our Boys*. From that time until 1887, when he went to Australia, Mr. Warner played a constant succession of leading parts in pieces that drew all London, or, at any rate, that section of "all London" which was careful to miss none of the productions that made the Adelphi and the Princess's so popular as twin homes of the robustly-romantic drama. It was, of course, his Coupeau in *Drink*, Charles Reade's adaptation from Zola, that first revealed Mr. Warner's talent for realism, and showed him to possess extraordinary power in portraying the abnormal and revolting characteristics of a confirmed drunkard. Without exaggerating, he produced the most profound and, it must be added, the most harrowing impression of the horrors of the drink-mania, winning high praise from all real critics, including M. Sarcey, and wringing from M. Coquelin the exclamation that it was "one of the finest dramatic efforts ever seen on the stage." The hero of *It is Never Too Late to Mend*, Badger in *The Streets of London*, Michael Strogoff in the *Courier of the Tsar*, Ned Drayton, the hero of *In the Ranks*, and Colonel Pescott in *Held by the Enemy*, were all parts that Mr. Warner played capitally in his accustomed manner. On the other hand, he applied a more subtle treatment to Farmer Allan in Tennyson's *Dora*, attacking the part of the stubborn but tender-hearted old farmer in a less strenuous manner, and presenting a forcible but a restrained and convincing picture. Miss Grace Warner has acted principally with her father, and has met with genuine success in a wide range of parts.

# At the Play.

## IN LONDON.

THE early advent of summer weather has had a disastrous effect upon many of the West-end theatres, business having dropped in proportion as the mercury rose. Several of the recently-produced novelties have proved, moreover, but little to the public taste, and alterations in existing programmes are again imminent.

### KING HENRY IV.

#### (FIRST PART.)

Revived at the Haymarket Theatre, on the afternoon of Friday, May 8.

Sir John Falstaff ..	Mr. TREE.	Sir Walter Blunt ..	Mr. F. MACVICARS.
King Henry IV. . . .	Mr. WM. MOLLISON.	Sir Richard Vernon..	Mr. A. E. HIPPLEY.
Henry, Prince of Wales	Mr. FRANK GILLMORE.	Poins .. .. .	Mr. HERBERT ROSS.
Prince John of Lancaster .. . . .	Mr. BERTÉ THOMAS.	Owen Glendower ..	Mr. HOLMAN CLARK.
Earl of Westmoreland	Mr. F. PERCIVAL STEVENS	Douglas.. .. .	Mr. HENRY VIBART.
Thomas Percy, Earl of Worcester .. . .	Mr. FRED EVERILL.	Francis.. .. .	Mr. D. J. WILLIAMS.
Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland ..	Mr. CHARLES ALLAN.	Bardolph .. .. .	Mr. LIONEL BROUGH.
Henry Percy, sur-named Hotspur ..	Mr. LEWIS WALLER.	Gadshill .. .. .	Mr. GERALD DU MAURIER.
Edmund Mortimer, Earl of March ..	Mr. C. M. HALLARD.	Peto .. .. .	Mr. GAYER MACKAY.
		Sheriff .. .. .	Mr. ARTHUR COE.
		Lady Percy.. ..	Mrs. TREE.
		Lady Mortimer ..	Miss MARION EVANS.
		Mistress Quickly ..	Miss KATE PHILLIPS.

Mr. Beerbohm Tree is a man of boundless energy and unceasing enterprise. With so pronounced a success as that obtained by *Trilby* at the Haymarket, one might fancy he would be content to rest for a while on his laurels, and accept the goods the gods have sent him. Luckily for the public, however, he is made of other metal. Inactivity is hateful to him; he is possessed by the true artistic yearning towards fresh endeavour. So, despite the heavy draft made upon his resources by seven performances in each week of such an arduous part as Svengali, he undertakes personally to rehearse and produce a piece of the formidable proportions of *King Henry IV.*, and, in addition, assigns to himself the long and onerous part of Sir John Falstaff. The result only proves how grateful playgoers in general and lovers of Shakspeare in particular should be for the unappeasable love of work which prompts him to such achievements. But for that they might have lost the privilege of witnessing the most complete and satisfying production of Shakspeare's work which the present generation, at any rate, has had the opportunity of seeing. Although avowedly intended merely for a limited number of afternoon representations, the revival is distinguished by a taste, accuracy, and thoroughness which leave little to be desired. Nor is there much fault to be found with the manner in which Mr. Tree has handled the text. Certain excisions had of necessity to be made, and although this student

or that will, of course, deplore the loss of the passage most dear to his heart, the unimpassioned observer will probably admit that, regard being had to the circumstances, the editing could scarcely have been better done. On one point only are we disposed seriously to join issue with Mr. Tree, and that is in respect of his total suppression of the final noble and inspiring scene, and his presentation in its place of a somewhat crude, although, from the popular standpoint, fairly effective, tableau showing the triumphant army in the moment of victory after the battle of Shrewsbury. The omission of the finely-conceived scene in which King Henry generously pardons his valiant opponent, the Douglas, is in our eyes an error of judgment for which nothing can atone. But otherwise we have nothing but praise for the taste and discretion shown in the present revival, in anticipation of which, by-the-by, an exhaustive article upon Shakspeare's play and its various exponents appeared in the April number of this magazine.

Of Mr. Tree's Falstaff we have already had experience in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. But the fat knight of the earlier play is a very different being from that of the later. The former is conceived in a spirit of buffoonery; the latter, despite the broad and typically coarse nature of his wit, is a genuine humorist. In depicting the Falstaff of *King Henry IV.*, the actor has, accordingly, a better and more legitimate opportunity. Of this Mr. Tree avails himself fully. His make-up is in itself an extraordinary *tour de force*. By some inexplicable means he contrives to change his slim figure into one of vast proportions; even the thin features assume an appearance of grossness and obesity. But it is in the transformation of his voice that Mr. Tree exhibits the greatest cleverness. No longer clear and resonant, its tones are thick and unctuous; it expresses fatness in every note. Into the humour of the part Mr. Tree enters thoroughly, the scenes in the Boar's Head tavern affording a rich feast of fun. Quite on a level with this performance is Mr. Lewis Waller's noble presentment of the impetuous Hotspur. Nothing finer has hitherto been accomplished by this singularly clever artist, whose style has gained of late extraordinarily in subtlety and range of expression. Mr. Waller speaks blank verse with a keen sense of the meaning of every word, and with a praiseworthy regard for the laws of rhythm. Nor is he insensible to the occasional flashes of humour that serve to give lightness and variety to the character. Mr. William Mollison, an actor much too intelligent to hide his light in the provinces, lent dignity and weight to the part of King Henry, while Mr. Frank Gillmore as Prince Hal, if a trifle unequal in the less serious



passages, proved quite satisfactory in the graver ones. Unfortunately, lack of space debars us from more than mentioning in terms of praise the Pains of Mr. Herbert Ross, the Bardolph of Mr. Lionel Brough, the Mistress Quickly of Miss Kate Phillips, the Lady Mortimer of Miss Marion Evans, and the Lady Percy of Mrs. Tree.

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#### THE OPERA.

The opening night at the Royal Opera (May 11) was sufficiently brilliant to satisfy the most exigent of managers and most *blasé* of subscribers. Whether it foreshadowed an equally brilliant season remains to be seen; but it will certainly not be the fault of the *impresario*, or through lack of material help from the old and the new guard of his operatic *clientèle*, should the "promise of May" not be ultimately followed by the fulfilment of July. True, there is no Adelina Patti this year; there is no immediate indication of the occurrence of a State performance; there is not even the likelihood of some great production which might perchance stamp the season with the *cachet* of a noble artistic achievement. But, on the other hand, there is M. Jean de Reszke; and that, in the opinion of the opera-lovers who frequent Covent Garden to-day, counts for a very great deal. Yes, the famous Polish tenor has returned to us, after nearly two years' absence, and after six months of well-nigh continuous labour in the United States, with voice and method beautiful and faultless as ever, with charm undiminished, and with means even fresher and more robust perhaps than when he was last here. He is now at the very zenith of his career. He has not yet passed the prime of life, and he has only been singing in public (as a tenor) at least for a period of about eleven years. With powers well preserved he might go on for another twenty, but the probabilities are that he will prefer to retire as soon as he has amassed an adequate fortune; and it is because his admirers have some inkling of this that they never lose a chance of hearing him. For choice, too, they will listen to him towards the end rather than at the beginning of an opera. Early in the evening he seems to be saving himself; as the performance goes on he warms up to his work, and by the time the last act has come he is the real, supreme, incomparable Jean de Reszke.

Finely indeed did he sing on the opening night in the tomb scene of *Romeo*. Some thought he had never uttered that wondrously pathetic farewell with such tragic eloquence, such ineffable beauty of vocal tone before. It was very hard, after this triumphant return, to meet with the "stupid" accident to his foot (as he himself described it), which prevented his appear-

ance in *Faust* later in the same week. But the disappointment, though annoying at the moment, was speedily forgotten a few nights later, when M. de Reszke reappeared in Gounod's later opera and met with a greeting not less enthusiastic than the first. His brother Edouard, unluckily enough, caught a cold immediately after arriving in England, and the gifted basso was unable to make his *rentrée* until the German performance of *Lohengrin*, which, by the way, exhibited both artists for the first time on this side of the Atlantic as the exponents of Wagner's original text. What is more, they pronounce it as accurately and "trippingly on the tongue" as they do French and Italian.

On the other events of the season, so far, there is no occasion to dwell at any length. Madame Mantelli, a new mezzo-contralto, made her *début* as Leonora in *La Favorita*, but created a much more favourable impression (*pace* one leading critic only) as Ortruda in an Italian representation of *Lohengrin*, given for the *rentrée* of Madame Albani. A splendid dramatic artist and the possessor of a fine voice is this Madame Mantelli. The young tenor, Signor Cremonini, who sang with her in both the above-mentioned operas, has acquired some slight increase of vocal power since he first came here in the autumn of 1892, but for such parts as Fernando and the Knight of the Swan he still "needs time." A fairly successful *début* has likewise been noted to Miss Marguerite Reid, an American soprano, who sang Nedda in *Pagliacci* during the opening week. For the rest, it will suffice to record the welcome return of Miss Macintyre, Signor de Lucia, and Signor Ancona in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, of Miss Marie Engle, M. Bennard, M. Castelmary, and M. Plançon in *Philémon*, and of Miss Elba, Miss Jenie Hudleston (who made a hit as the Page in *Romeo*), Miss Meisslinger, and Mr. David Bispham in *Hansel and Gretel*.

### ROSEMARY.

A Play, in Four Acts, by LOUIS N. PARKER and MURRAY CARSON. Produced at the Criterion Theatre, May 16.

Sir Jasper Thorndyke	Mr. CHARLES WYNDHAM.	Abraham	..	..	Mr. F. H. TYLER.
Professor Jogram	.. Mr. J. H. BARNES.	Stilt Walker	..	..	Mr. J. BYRON.
Captain Cruickshank,		Mrs. Cruickshank	..	..	Miss CARLOTTA ADDISON.
R.N.	.. Mr. ALFRED BISHOP.	Mrs. Minifie	..	..	Miss EMILY VININO.
William Westwood	.. Mr. KENNETH DOUGLAS.	Priscilla	..	..	Miss ANNIE HUGHES.
George Minifie	.. Mr. JAMES WELCH.	Dorothy Cruickshank	Miss	MARY MOORE.	

For those who have the best interests of the English stage at heart, for those who desire to see it cleansed of impurity and of suggestiveness, the complete success of *Rosemary* is an event of the highest importance. During the past few months we have had, only too frequently, to utter a strong and emphatic protest against the tendency revealed by modern dramatists—and particularly lady dramatists—to make of the theatre a vehicle for the exposition of nauseous subjects and unwholesome discussions.

*Rosemary* affords triumphant and unanswerable proof that the public still retains its taste for simplicity, sweetness, and cleanliness. No play within recent times has possessed these qualities in a higher degree. No play has, on its production, been received with greater warmth; and we are fain to believe that the lesson will not be lost upon managers or upon playwrights. Personally, we feel we cannot be too grateful to Mr. Wyndham for having given us, or to Messrs. Louis N. Parker and Murray Carson for having written, a piece so full of fragrance, gaiety, and poetry. The authors aim at no tremendous effects, no claptrap sensations. They are content to tell a simple love-story in a simple way. But they possess the rare art of going straight to the heart of the listener, of appealing forcibly and directly to his best emotions. How this is accomplished, let us endeavour for a moment to show.

Sir Jasper Thorndyke, a country gentleman bordering upon middle age, has come to regard himself as a confirmed bachelor, when, unexpectedly, fate brings to his very door pretty little Dorothy Cruickshank, in the act of eloping with sturdy young William Westwood. Sir Jasper willingly gives the couple shelter, and also finds himself playing the part of host to Dorothy's father and mother, who have followed in pursuit of the truant pair. It requires but little diplomacy on Sir Jasper's part to reconcile these conflicting elements, and at his suggestion the entire party set out for London, in order to witness Queen Victoria's coronation—the action of the first three acts of the piece passes in 1838—and to arrange for Dorothy and William's wedding. Meanwhile, however, Sir Jasper has fallen in love with Dorothy—a circumstance for which the girl's unconscious encouragement and her sweetheart's cubbish brusqueness afford sufficient justification. His eyes, however, are quickly opened to his mistake—first by his old friend, Professor Jogram, in an exceedingly powerful scene, and subsequently by Dorothy herself. To an honourable man there remains but one course open, and this Sir Jasper unhesitatingly adopts. Dorothy is handed over to the man she really loves, and Sir Jasper is left alone, his dream shattered, his future bereft of the sunshine that had momentarily crept into it. When the story is resumed in the last act fifty years have elapsed. It is the day of the Queen's Jubilee. Sir Jasper, now a nonagenarian, is again in the room where he parted with Dorothy. Some of the events connected with her he is able to recall; others he has totally forgotten. What the authors wish to convey by the scene we admit we are unable to guess exactly. At one instant they appear anxious to enforce the blessedness of forgetfulness; at



another the enduring value of memory. In any case there is no getting away from the fact that so melancholy a termination to a delightful and charming play is apt to leave the audience a trifle depressed and gloomy.

No mere outline of the story can, however, give even a faint impression of the inexpressible fascination, the exquisite tenderness and delicacy of the piece, replete as it is with touches of the most enchanting description. Over it all the authors' wit plays with the brightness of summer lightning. It is long, moreover, since Mr. Wyndham has had a part suiting him so thoroughly as that of Squire Thorndyke. Pathos and humour, tenderness and gaiety—for the expression of each he is afforded constant opportunity. How splendidly he profits by the chance it is hardly necessary to say. Mr. J. H. Barnes's Professor Jogram is a fine piece of work, full of character and earnestness; while Mr. Alfred Bishop gave a superbly finished portrait of the choleric Captain Cruickshank. Mr. Kenneth Douglas played with much intelligence as William, and Mr. James Welch's Postboy was scarcely inferior to his remarkable study of "The Man in the Street." No higher praise could be accorded it. Miss Carlotta Addison showed how sweet and genial an elderly lady can be; Miss Annie Hughes provided a clever sketch of a pert serving maid, while Miss Mary Moore, as Dorothy, was as pretty and charming as the heart of man could well desire.

### A MATCHMAKER.

A Comedy in Four Acts, by CLO GRAVES and GERTRUDE KINGSTON. Produced at the Shaftesbury Theatre, May 9.

Archibald Rolles .. ..	Mr. LEWIS WALLER.	Wilhelmina .. ..	Miss FLORENCE WEST.
The Marquis of Westbourne .. ..	Mr. C. P. LITTLE.	Georgiana Ridout ..	Miss BEATRICE FERRAR.
The Hon. Charles Soper ..	Mr. E. W. GARDINER.	Flora .. ..	Miss SPENCER BRUNTON.
The Bishop of Dorchester .. ..	Mr. KENNETH BLACK.	Ethel .. ..	Miss DAISY BROUGH.
The Earl of Cranboisic ..	Mr. LESLY THOMSON.	Betty Bullen .. ..	Miss NINA BOUCAULT.
Bingley Bligh, M.P. ..	Mr. ALFRED MALTBY.	Lady Louisa Holdawle .. ..	Miss FANNY COLEMAN.
Waite .. ..	Mr. GILBERT TRENT.	Mrs. Waite .. ..	Mrs. ARTHUR AYER.
Roberts .. ..	Mr. CHARLES ROSS.	Margaretta .. ..	Miss LENA ASHWELL.
		Mrs. Lane .. ..	Miss GERTRUDE KINGSTON

That there is some ingenuity and not a little cleverness in Miss Clo Graves' and Miss Gertrude Kingston's new comedy will not be denied. But, unfortunately, ingenuity and cleverness are of slight avail on the stage when they are so hopelessly misapplied as in this particular instance. *A Matchmaker* is a thoroughly invertebrate piece of work, possessing little coherence and no cohesion. The first act is entirely consumed in frivolous chatter, and it is not until the beginning of the second that the real aim of the writers can be discovered. Even then the spectator is forced to admit how insubstantial are his grounds for congratulation, inasmuch as a more conventional or familiar story has seldom been placed before the public. A few lines

will suffice to indicate its scope. Mrs. Lane, a singularly silly woman, with a mischievous craze for matchmaking, has persuaded her friend, Margaretta Ridout, to accept the hand of the Marquis of Westbourne, a nobleman whose language would scarcely be tolerated in the kitchen, and whose manners a stable-boy would blush to own. Four months of married misery serve to convince Margaretta of her mistake. Luckily, however, she finds an easy way out of her difficulties. The Marquis, it is suddenly discovered, had, fifteen years previously, given his name to a German barmaid called Wilhelmina, and as she conveniently turns up in Mrs. Lane's house just as the authoresses require her assistance, Margaretta is enabled to cast off her fetters and seek consolation for her past tribulations in the arms of an old admirer. Anything less convincing or more uninteresting could hardly be imagined. It is not, however, upon the main thread of their story that Miss Graves and Miss Kingston rely for success, but upon the numerous details which depend from it. To say that these are of a somewhat unsavoury character is a mild way of stating the truth. *A Matchmaker* is a loosely-constructed, ill-conceived, and garrulous play, in which occasionally may be found flashes of a spurious description of wit that frequently suggests a good deal more than it actually expresses. Nor is the piece fruitful of acting opportunities—a circumstance which relieves us of any necessity of commenting upon the efforts of the various performers.

### THE GEISHA.

A Japanese Musical Play, in Two Acts. The book by OWEN HALL. Lyrics by HARRY GREENBANK. Music by SIDNEY JONES. Produced at Daly's Theatre, April 25.

O Mimosan San ..	Miss MARIE TEMPEST.	Miss Mabel Grant ..	Miss ALICE DAVIS.
Juliette Diamant ..	Miss JULIETTE NESVILLE	Miss Louie Plumpton ..	Miss MARGARET FRASER.
Nami (Wave of the Sea)	Miss KRISTINE YUDALL.	Miss Molly Seamore ..	Miss LETTY LIND.
O Kiku San (Chrysanthemum ..	Miss EMILIE HERVE.	Reginald Fairfax ..	Mr. HAYDEN COFFIN.
O Nana San (Blossom)	Miss MARY FAWCETT.	Fred Cunningham ..	Mr. LOUIS BRADFIELD.
O Kinkoto San (Golden Harp) ..	Miss ELISE COOKE.	Arthur Cuddy ..	Mr. LEEDHAM BAN OCK.
O Kcmurasaki San (Little Violet) ..	Miss MARY COLLETTE.	George Grimston ..	Mr. SYDNEY ELLISON.
Lady Constance Wynne	Miss MAUD HOBSON.	Tommy Stanley (Midshipman) ..	Miss LYDIA FLOPP.
Miss Marie Worthington ..	Miss BLANCHE MASSEY.	Captain Katana ..	Mr. WILLIAM PHILP.
Miss Ethel Hurst ..	Miss HETTY HAMER.	Takemini ..	Mr. FREDK. ROSSE.
		Wun-hi ..	Mr. HUNTLEY WRIGHT.
		The Marquis Imari ..	Mr. HARRY MONKHOUSE.

In selecting Japan as the scene of his new musical play, Mr. Owen Hall almost compels comparison between his work and that masterpiece of comic invention, *The Mikado*. So far beyond rivalry, however, in his own particular sphere, is Mr. Gilbert, it would be almost cruel to pursue the analogy. Enough that, without displaying any great powers of originality or of witty endeavour, Mr. Hall has, in this instance, accomplished his work with considerable credit to himself. *The Geisha*

shows a very considerable advance upon *The Artist's Model*. It is more neatly constructed, and, wonderful to relate, presents something in the nature of a coherent story. That the author, after all, figures as a rather unimportant factor in the race for success merely implies that *The Geisha* belongs to the order of pieces whose prosperity springs chiefly from the efforts of stage-manager, scenic artist, and costumier. So lavish have all these been in their attentions that it would be difficult to recall a more sumptuous or tasteful spectacle than that presented in the latest production at Daly's. It must in fairness be added that, in the number of attractions, Mr. Sidney Jones's music counts for much. Mr. Jones has already proved himself a master of melody; but even he has given us nothing so charming, so rhythmic, and so appropriate as the score of *The Geisha*. Considerations of space alone prevent us from referring in detail to the many beautiful and interesting features which it contains. Equally unjust would it be to pass without notice the lyrics of Mr. Harry Greenbank, which, although evidently modelled upon those of Mr. Gilbert, possess a certain quaintness of their own. It is round the adventures of a bright young English maiden that the plot of the new piece revolves. Miss Molly Seamore is a visitor to Japan. Prompted by a sudden caprice, she determines to don the dress of a Geisha, or singing girl. In this capacity she is disposed of at public auction to a Japanese marquis, who, disappointed in another quarter, aspires to make her his wife. Molly, however, is not without friends eager to assist her. There is her lover, Reginald Fairfax, an officer on board H.M.S. *The Turtle*; there are also Lady Constance Wynne and Mimosa San, a real Geisha, who, rescued from the clutches of the Marquis, ranges herself on the side of the English. Assisted by an unscrupulous little French maid, who covets the Marquis for herself, these three experience little difficulty in carrying out their designs successfully. The charm of the piece centres chiefly, however, in the happy combination of local colour, dainty dresses, quaint dancing, and tuneful music. Wholly admirable is the company also. As Molly Seamore, Miss Letty Lind was at her best—the epitome, in other words, of all that is bright and winsome. Miss Marie Tempest sang delightfully, and Miss Juliette Nesville acted with her accustomed archness. Mr. Hayden Coffin furnished another variant upon his well-known impersonation of the breezy baritone, and to those who delight in broad humour, Mr. H. Monkhouse's performance of the Marquis doubtless appealed not in vain. Mr. Huntley Wright scored enormously as a kind of heathen Chinese, with a wonderfully effective dance, while Mr. William Philp, a comparative



new-comer, showed that, if he has still much to learn as an actor, he is, at any rate, the lucky possessor of a very pleasing tenor voice. Of the success of *The Geisha* there cannot be the slightest possible doubt.

### A NIGHT OUT.

A Farceical Comedy, in Three Acts, by GEORGES FEYDEAU and MAURICE DESVALLIERES. Produced at the Vaudeville Theatre, April 29.

Joseph Pinglet ..	Mr. GEORGE GIDDENS.	Marcelle .. ..	Miss FANNY WARD.
Paillard .. ..	Mr. CHAS. SUGDEN.	Angelique .. ..	Mrs. EDMUND PHELPS.
Mathieu .. ..	Mr. WILLIAM WYES.	Victorine .. ..	Miss PATTIE BROWNE.
Maxime .. ..	Mr. AUBREY FITZGERALD.	A Lady .. ..	Miss EVA MURTON.
Brochard .. ..	Mr. JOSEPH CARNE.	Hyacinthe .. ..	Miss LOTTIE SARGENT.
Boulot .. ..	Mr. GUS DANBY.	Violette .. ..	Miss E. BARRINGTON.
Bastien .. ..	Mr. E. W. THOMAS.	Marguerite .. ..	Miss EILEEN CONCANEN.
Ernest .. ..	Mr. HERBERT PETERS.	Rose .. ..	Miss EDITH HENDERSON.
Botticelli .. ..	Mr. NEVILLE DOONE.		

No hint is afforded by the Vaudeville programme as to the identity of the writer responsible for the English version of MM. Feydeau and Desvallière's farce, *L'Hôtel du Libre Echange*. The adaptation, however, comes to us *viâ* America, where it has enjoyed considerable success under the guiding hand of Mr. Charles Frohman. A few supplementary touches have, it is understood, been given to it by Mr. Seymour Hicks, by whom the piece is produced. *A Night Out* makes no claims to rank as literature. It is simply a rollicking piece of fun, which at many points impinges upon pantomimic buffoonery. As played in Paris it contained elements that would not have been tolerated here for a moment, and although the process of expurgation has been deftly performed, the farce is not wholly without its risky moments. Those, however, who are not in the habit of examining *les dessous des cartes* need have little fear of having their susceptibilities offended. The plot runs upon lines of the most familiar nature, resembling in particular those of *Pink Dominos*. Unfortunately, MM. Feydeau and Desvallières do not possess either the keen wit or the constructive ability of the authors of that famous piece. Nevertheless, their farce is undeniably amusing, and possesses the great merit of improving as it goes along. Joseph Pinglet, a commonplace person, invites pretty Mrs. Paillard to accompany him, in the absence of her husband, to the theatre, and to share a little supper with him afterwards at the Hôtel Mascotte. Needless to say that, on one pretext or another, all the characters assemble at the same place, and a scene of the wildest confusion ensues. In the third act the imbroglio is unravelled with great ingenuity and skill, in a manner that leaves the reputation of the principal culprits intact. The farce is admirably played, notably by Mr. George Giddens, whose picture of comic despair is inimitable, by Mr. Charles Sugden, who gives a very clever portrait of Paillard, by Mr. Wyes as a stuttering provincial, by Mr. Aubrey Fitzgerald as a modern

Modus, and by Mrs. Edmund Phelps, Miss Fanny Ward, and Miss Pattie Browne. Its reception was unanimously favourable.

### THE NEW BABY.

A Deception, in Three Acts, adapted from the German "Der Rabenvater," by H. F. FISCHER and J. JARNO, by ARTHUR BOURCHIER. Produced at the Royalty Theatre, April 28.

Col. Wilberforce Walker .. ..	Mr. ARTHUR BOURCHIER	Drusilla Walker..	Miss ALICE MANSFIELD.
Commodore Van Gutt .. ..	Mr. W. BLAKELEY.	Patience Van Gutt	Mrs. B. M. DE SOLLA.
Petruchio Gomez .. ..	Mr. W. G. ELLIOT.	Faith .. ..	Miss IRENE VANBRUGH.
Harry .. ..	Mr. CHARLES TROODE.	Kate Gomez .. ..	Miss KATHARINE STEWART.
		Pascoe .. ..	Miss LILIAN MILLWARD.

There is no need to waste many words over Mr. Bouchier's latest piece, *The New Baby*. Its production is simply a convincing proof of lack of good taste and want of managerial judgment. Such things are best buried and forgotten as speedily as possible. As a concession to the necessities of record, we mention that the story turns upon the device adopted by a certain Colonel Walker of inventing an illegitimate son in order that he may obtain from his wife the means to run up to London and enjoy himself. Add to this the altogether delightful episode of two young people on the brink of an engagement being informed that they are brother and sister, and their love, consequently, an incestuous one. Mr. Bouchier may consider incidents of the kind fit subjects for laughter and ridicule. Let us be grateful for the fact that his views on the point are not, and have little prospect of becoming, general.

### MY ASTRAL BODY.

A Farce, in Three Acts, by W. C. HUDSON and NICHOLAS COLTHURST. Produced at the Court Theatre, April 22.

Clarke Cariston .. ..	Mr. YORKE STEPHENS.	Naingre Phu .. ..	Mr. J. F. CORNISH.
Clarke Cariston's Astral Body .. ..	Mr. BECKWITH.	Bullam Pore .. ..	Mr. W. LEE.
Albert Thayer .. ..	Mr. C. LOWNE.	Miss Mildred Cariston	Miss FANNY COLEMAN
David Meredith, J.P. ..	Mr. ERNEST HENDRIE.	Anne Meredith .. ..	Miss FAIRBROTHER.
		Kate Harland .. ..	Miss HELEN PETRIE.

*My Astral Body* contains a fairly happy idea worked out to indifferent advantage. As the basis of a one-act farce it would doubtless prove effective, but extended over three acts it becomes monotonous and tiresome. Apart from this the story conceived by the authors is of the most trivial and common-place description, and the dialogue, although occasionally revealing glimpses of a rough-and-ready kind of humour, bald and prosaic. A young fellow named Clarke Cariston is supposed to have acquired the faculty of projecting his astral body where and when he will. But, unfortunately, the abuse of this power speedily brings its own punishment, for the body, having obtained the upper hand of its owner, turns the tables upon him, and by its strange vagaries contrives to plunge him into a vortex of hideous mishaps. Eventually succour reaches him from one Naingre Phu, a Maharajah of India and devotee (*sic*) of Buddha, who condemns the unruly spirit to inhabit the body of a dog for seven years by way of penalty for its misdoings. The performance was

chiefly remarkable for the extraordinary energy shown in the unusually long and onerous part of Cariston by Mr. Yorke Stephens, who has never played with greater dash, precision, or briskness. Fair support was afforded him by the remainder of the company.

### MARY PENNINGTON, SPINSTER.

An Original Comedy, in Four Acts, by W. R. WALKES. Produced at the St. James's Theatre, April 24.

Mr. Timothy Hale,		Lady Maitland ..	Miss OLGA BRANDON.
M.R.C.S., L.S.A. ..	Mr. CYRIL MAUDE.	Prudence Dering ..	Miss MARY JERROLD.
George Armstrong ..	Mr. FRANK FENTON.	Mrs. Pennington's	
Algy Blomfield ..	Mr. SYDNEY BROUGH.	Servant ..	Miss FURTADO CLARKE.
Mary Pennington ..	Miss KAJE RORKE.	Dr. Hale's Servant ..	Mr. W. A. CHANDLER.

Mr. W. R. Walkes is already favourably known as the writer of several clever little pieces. In *Mary Pennington, Spinster*, he makes, however, a bolder bid for fame. His latest venture, if unsuccessful in quite hitting the mark, reveals at least sufficient ability on the author's part to warrant the hope that he will yet do so. From a playwright who is capable of giving us such capital comedy scenes as those contained in the new play much may be expected; and when Mr. Walkes has thoroughly mastered the art of stage construction, and of giving due form and substance to a dramatic story, something of a really enduring nature may be looked for from his pen. Meanwhile there is much good material in *Mary Pennington*, although the author's manner of manipulating it is not always effective. The comic scenes, excellent as they are, have, for instance, little or no connection with the main thread of the story, the result being that while these are in progress the plot itself comes to a standstill. So fresh and natural, however, is the humour of the piece that one cannot contemplate its sacrifice without a feeling of regret. If in future efforts Mr. Walkes will successfully endeavour to blend into one component whole the various elements required to constitute a play, all will be well. Let him consider also the necessity of exhibiting the motives of his characters in a way to render them convincing. Far from satisfactory in this respect is his new play. Of the plot we can give only the briefest *résumé*. Mary Pennington has inherited her father's business, and with it his strong commercial instinct. She accepts as partner a young fellow named Armstrong, who, of course, straightway falls in love with her. In order to silence scandal, Mary determines to become his wife, although insisting that nothing but respect and consideration for their common interests prompts her to the step. With the appearance of a rival on the scene, her eyes are quickly opened to the truth that she really loves Armstrong, who, however, believing the contrary, refuses to profit by the circumstance. An act of supposed self-sacrifice on his part serves,



in the end, to bring the over-sensitive couple together, and the play ends with the prospect of a happy marriage. In the title-part Miss Kate Rorke acted with remarkable force and tenderness, while Mr. Frank Fenton, save for an unfortunate trick of swallowing his words, made a thoroughly acceptable Armstrong. Mr. Cyril Maude furnished another of his clearly-cut and carefully-finished portraits of a good-natured old gentleman ; but the real success of the afternoon fell to Miss Mary Jerrold and Mr. Sydney Brough as a couple of young lovers. No brighter, pleasanter, or more inspiriting performance could in either instance be desired.

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#### THE WYNDHAM CELEBRATION.

To mention the Criterion Theatre is inevitably to recall the name of Mr. Charles Wyndham. During the long space of twenty years, the two have been so closely associated as to have become inseparable in the public mind. Of the laughter and the enjoyment, the emotion and the pleasure, which playgoers have drawn from the circumstance, we have no space to speak. But of such an event it is well there should be public recognition—well that a moment should be chosen to stamp the fact in indelible letters upon the memory of those for whose amusement the popular comedian has worked so loyally and so unceasingly. The exceptionally interesting series of performances given on the 1st of May at the Lyceum and Criterion Theatres constituted at one and the same time a necessary act of commemoration and a well-deserved tribute of regard and affection to the genius of the actor in whose honour they were undertaken. From every quarter came expressions of sympathetic interest, and from the members of the theatrical profession offers of assistance that revealed in the clearest manner the high esteem in which Mr. Wyndham is held by his comrades. Nor could a more eloquent testimony to the popularity of the movement be found than in the fact that, as the result of the day's proceedings, Mr. Wyndham was enabled to send a cheque for the magnificent sum of £2,450 to the Actors' Benevolent Fund. Anything like detailed comment upon a programme so long and so varied as that provided would be superfluous, even were it possible here. The particulars speak for themselves. In the afternoon, at the Lyceum, was given *The Clerical Error*, with Mr. Wilson Barrett in his original part. Then followed the first act of *Money*, Mr. Tree appearing as Evelyn, Mr. C. Hawtrey as Blount, Mr. Bancroft as Smooth, Mr. Lionel Brough as Graves, Mr. Waring as Glossmore, Mr. Fernandez as Sharp, Mr. Arthur Roberts in the humble capacity of a servant, Mrs. Tree as

Georgina, and Mrs. Bancroft as Lady Franklin. Subsequently were presented the last three acts of *The School for Scandal*, with a marvellously brilliant cast, of which it must suffice to mention Mr. Farren as Sir Peter, Mr. Wyndham as Charles, Mr. Forbes-Robertson as Joseph, Mr. Alexander as Careless, Mr. Terriss as Sir Harry, Miss Mary Moore as Maria, and Mrs. Patrick Campbell as Lady Teazle. Upon the curtain again ascending, Mr. Wyndham was discovered surrounded by the company and a large number of friends, while opposite to him stood Mr. Comyns Carr, who, in a brief but effective speech, begged his acceptance of a handsome gold cigar-and-cigarette box, on the lid of which figured the initials "C. W." worked in diamonds. Mr. Wyndham replied in a few graceful words, not entirely untouched by emotion. In the evening, at the Criterion, the performance included the one-act farce, *Who's to Win Him?* a scene from *The Hunchback* by Miss Marion Terry and Mr. Leonard Boyne, the whole of *David Garrick*, with Miss Moore and Mr. Wyndham in their old parts, and the second act of *The Critic*, hopelessly ruined by the silly gags of the actors.

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#### IN PARIS.

*Hellé*, an opera in four acts, by M. Alphonse Duvernoy, words by MM. de Locle and Charles Nutter, at the Grand Opera, is quite a reactionary work. Of Wagner's influence there is not a trace in it! Nor is an opera in the good old style that nobody requires to work up beforehand, a partition without any effort to give expression to character or emotion, without any subtle sub-delineation of inner feeling, without warnings of the orchestra of coming things, by any means out of place. In fact, a light, simple, old-fashioned performance, with a ballet and a handsome woman like Mme. Rose Caron constantly to the front, is quite a pleasant alternative when one is not in the humour for more serious work. So *Hellé* fulfils a purpose. *Hellé* is priestess of a temple of Diana in Thessaly, which, by some unaccountable anachronism best known to the librettists, has survived to the fourteenth century, when Gautier, ex-Duke of Athens, driven by a storm out of his bearings, casts anchor in its vicinity. He sees the priestess, and straightway falls desperately in love with her, a love which the priestess, true to her vows, however, does not share. Gautier carries her off, and in the second act has her with him at Florence, which he has captured. A celebration of the festival of St. John, the patron saint of Florence, procures the occasion for the ballet with Mlle. Zambelli. Here *Hellé*,

thirsting for vengeance against her *ravisser*, gets her chance. Gautier has a son, Jean, whom he dearly loves. Jean has fallen in love with her, too. The father shall kill his own son, and Hellé's and the goddess's wrath will be appeased. Unfortunately for this consummation, Hellé in the third act falls in love with Jean herself. At the critical moment Gautier surprises Jean at Hellé's feet, and she, instead of letting him take it, averts the father's vengeance. Meanwhile an insurrection has broken out at Florence, and Hellé, in the fourth act, is to be burnt as a sorceress. She is rescued by Jean, breaks her vows to Diana, and expiates her crime by the goddess's agency. Her lover kills himself over her body in the approved fashion. Alongside Mme. Caron, MM. Delmas and Alvarez hold the two leading male parts. There is pretty music in the piece—nothing very striking, and some inequality.

*Manon Roland*, at the Française, by MM. Emile Bergerat and Camille de Sainté Croix, in five acts and in verse, is one of the most interesting and attractive spectacles which have been given for some time past by the illustrious company. The story in itself is hardly a play, the series of episodes not being firmly strung together by any main motive. But the exquisitely elaborate *mise en scène*, the reproduction of the spirit of the period, the general interest in the well-known characters forming the *dramatis personæ*, and the careful rendering of the careful writing makes one grateful for such an effort to put out good work. The story is that of the famous Mme. Roland, who, married to a man twenty years her senior, is admired and loved by Buzot. She has promised her husband that whenever she loves any man but him she will tell him. We pass in the first and second acts from Roland's simple household at the Platière, near Lyons, to a corner of old Paris during the Revolution, in which we see a feverish crowd, as it was and is still, resentful, generous, foolish, angry, and good-humoured by turns. Mme. Roland is at the height of her influence and fame in the midst of all the nervous excitement of a political upheaval. Drums and music and cavalcades resound in the narrow streets. The mixture of terror and gaiety in this second act is extremely telling. In the third we are at Roland's ministry: he is Minister of the Interior. Outside we still hear the excitement of the mob and the drums and music, while the great tragedy of the Terror is in progress, and life and death are dependent on political compromises and pledges. The Girondists must sign themselves away to Danton or die. They prefer to live, except Manon (Mme. Worms-Baretta), and Buzot will do as she bids him. She gives him her order by tearing up the document of



surrender, thus avows her love to him, and sends all her political confederates to the scaffold. In the fourth act she is at the Conciergerie awaiting execution. There is a scene in this which is extremely touching. Reading a letter from her daughter, she reaches the words *Je t'aime*, stops halfway, and breaks down. Hardly an eye in the theatre remains dry. It is needless to say that she goes to execution uttering the words :

“Liberté, chimère sainte, que de crimes, hélas ! on commet en ton nom !”

Other novelties of the month are *Catherine de Russio*, an historical drama, by MM. Paul Ginisty and Samson, at the Châtelet, *Dossier 113*, by Edgard Pourcelle, at the Théâtre de la République, and *Deux Sœurs*, by Jean Thorel, at the Odéon.

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#### IN BERLIN.

A most interesting performance of Johann Nestroy's *Lumpacivagabundus* has been given at the Deutsches Theatre. The company of this theatre, which includes some of the best actors in the German Empire, played the piece in honour of the artistic jubilee of the veteran actor, Ludwig Menzel, and the success of the representation was such that there can be little doubt that it will be repeated very soon. The humour of old Vienna, which is so admirably crystallised in *Lumpacivagabundus* was perhaps never better rendered than on this occasion. The Austrian members of the company seemed to have infected their colleagues with their own native appreciation of Nestroy's talents, which are far better known and loved in Austria than in Germany. Herr Kainz, the Romeo and the Don Carlos of the Deutsches Theatre, astonished everyone by his versatility, and from first to last the performance was welcomed as a charming departure from conventional lines.

At the Lessing Theatre, Johann Strauss's *Waldmeister*, which was brought out some time ago in Vienna, has met with the same encouraging reception as it enjoyed in the Austrian capital. Strauss himself conducted, and as he ascended the conductor's seat, which was decorated with flowers, he was most warmly greeted. The first act was well, but not enthusiastically, received. The second made a great impression, especially the *finale* ; and the third act sealed the triumph of the evening.

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#### IN VIENNA.

A three-act novelty, *Im siebenten Himmel* (*In the Seventh Heaven*), by Krenn and Lindau, with music by Ferdinand Pagin, has been brought out at the Theater an der Wien. The chief character of the piece—which is a kind of musical farce—is a

well-educated invalid. This gentleman is very rich, and the physicians who recommend all manner of remedies to him have his applause, while a doctor who says "There is nothing the matter with you!" is never allowed to enter the house again. The rich patient accidentally goes to a ball, where he makes the acquaintance of a Hungarian widow, for whom he immediately takes a great liking. He offers her champagne, which she accepts; he dances with her; and, finally, he arrives at the conviction that his illness exists only in his imagination, and he marries the fair Hungarian. It turns out that the lady is neither a Hungarian nor a widow, but a Vienna barmaid. Besides these persons, we are introduced to an old gentleman with two young nieces, who takes an appointment given to his nephew as intended for himself, keeps it punctually, and is much astonished by the lady, who will not remove her veil, but who develops an enormous appetite. As he is about to kiss her she runs away, and he afterwards learns that she was not a lady at all, but his manservant masquerading in female attire. In pieces of this kind everything depends upon the performers, and they discharged the task imposed upon them with much liveliness and spirit. The principal rôle was played by Girardi with his usual skill. At the conclusion of the piece, authors and artists were called before the curtain and cordially received. At the Raimund Theater, *Die Näherin* (*The Seamstress*), by Ludwig Held, has met with a very flattering reception. It is a farce of the true Viennese type, and has already been played a good many times at various theatres in the capital, but its popularity shows no sign of waning. The *Hôtel du Libre Echange*, now being played in London under the title of *A Night Out*, has met with the same welcome in Vienna as in other cities. It is called *Hotel zum Freihaven*, and lends itself very well to the temperament of the Viennese, who greeted it with rapturous applause. Two other pieces may be mentioned—*Das wahre Glück* (*True Happiness*) at the Volkstheater, by an anonymous author, and *Liebe auf den ersten Blick* (*Love at First Sight*), by Antony, at the Theater an der Wien. Neither of them, however, is worthy of detailed comment. *My Official Wife*, which is ascribed to Herr Olden, has been forbidden by the censorship on account of Nihilistic allusions, which are supposed to be objectionable to Russian susceptibilities.

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#### IN ITALIAN CITIES.

*Djamileh*, a short opera which, though performed a few times at Rome in the year 1890, is to all intents and purposes a new work to Italian playgoers in general, was produced at the Lirico

Internazionale, Milan, on the occasion of a performance given for the benefit of the Italian Theatrical Mutual Aid Association. The execution was, unfortunately, not all that could be desired, it being very manifest that the rehearsals had been too few, and that the various parts had not been so well distributed among the artists of the company as a better estimation of their relative capabilities would have suggested. These drawbacks did not, however, destroy the charm of originality and the Oriental colouring which are the chief features of the work; and hopes are entertained that *Djamileh* will before very long be seen again under more favourable conditions. *El Clarinett*, a comedy in three acts, written in the Lombardy dialect, by Signori Pozza and Bertolazzi, which turns upon the well-worn story of an unsuspecting husband, an unfaithful wife, and a treacherous friend, was performed recently at the Teatro Valle, Rome, by Signor Edoardo Ferravilla's Milanese company, and met with a very good reception. Another performance worth recording is that of Herr Van Werterhont's short drama, *Dona Flor*, which achieved great success at the San Carlo Theatre, Naples. On May 12th, the Onorato company played *Pregindizio Fatale*, a new three-act play by Signor Francesco Seni, at the Teatro Manzoni, Rome, and at the fall of the curtain the author and several of the leading members of the company had to respond to repeated enthusiastic calls. The story unfolded by the plot is one of every-day life, and possesses in a high degree one at least of the qualities which may be regarded as essential to a popular success, namely, a direct appeal to the best feelings of the audience.

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#### IN MADRID.

*El Gaitero*, which was put on the stage of the Zarzuela for the first time early in May, suffers from the one fault of a needless extension to the limits of an ordinary comedy, its plot being far more suitable to a short, crisp *zarzuela*, and as such it would take a very good place among these favourites of the Spanish people. If, indeed, the authors, Señores Perrin, Palacios, and Nieto, follow the advice which is being freely extended to them by their friends, they will proceed to put it through a trimming process before it is next seen on the stage. The scene is laid in a village of the province of Leon, and the chief characters are persons of a humble station in life. A series of untoward incidents serves to interrupt the preparations for the village piper's wedding a few hours before the ceremony is to take place, and the culminating point is reached when an accusation of infidelity to her prospective husband is made against the bride. To this accusation she



declines to make any answer, in order that she may protect a friend who is the real culprit, and she maintains this attitude of self-accusatory silence until the working out of minor details of the story reveals her innocence. Señoritas Arana and González, and Señores Romea, Rossell, Moncayo, and Gallo interpreted the parts entrusted to them with great skill. Don Antonio Perrin's company opened the new season at the Teatro Moderno with *El Trazado de una Línea*, a new play of a dramatic character, but hardly worthy the name of a drama, though many of the situations are very effective. The substance of the plot is the desire of a young artisan for vengeance for his sister's dishonour, and introduces a number of cold-blooded schemes which his excited imagination devises to attain his end on his discovering her seducer. This person happens to be an engineer employed on a neighbouring railway line, and the angry brother takes advantage of the fact to the extent of throwing the heartless wretch under the wheels of a passing train. A lyrical farce by Señor Garcia Plaza, the editor of the *Heraldo*, has been produced at the Romea with success. The title of the piece is *Los Conquistadores*, and some of the situations to which the plot gives rise bear evidence of great ingenuity on the part of the author. Señor Molina composed the incidental music to the new work.

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#### SIR HENRY IRVING IN AMERICA.

In spite of intense heat, which proved disastrous to many a theatrical enterprise, Sir Henry Irving's tour continued prosperous to the end. It was the same story as before—hard fights for seats, overflowing audiences, the most fervent of receptions. From Buffalo he went to Pittsburg, there to begin a five nights' engagement with *The Merchant of Venice*. The *Pittsburg Dispatch* speaks of the audience as one of the most extraordinary that had ever assembled at the Alvin. "For a Monday night," the paper says, "it was something wonderful, every seat being taken;" and the greeting he met with "must have warmed the great actor's heart." "The play," continues the *Dispatch*, "gives Mr. Irving the best of opportunities for the display of the wonderful skill in stage-management which has made him famous beyond all the other stage artists of his time—or any other time. The like of such stage pictures has been seen on only one previous occasion in this city, and that was when Mr. Irving was here before. Of Mr. Irving's Shylock much has been said. When he played the part here in 1884, the general opinion was that his conception of it was all wrong. So many of the best actors had

made of the part a study of low-comedy, with scarcely any suggestion of the sentiment that is contained in it; the critics had so long been treated to conceptions entirely different from that of the intelligent, suffering human being which Mr. Irving makes of it, that they refused to accept the new ideal. He carries through the splendid trial scene the master-picture of the play, until, broken and subdued, he stands silent and pathetic in his misery, and winning the pity of all in that one supreme moment. No actor that has ever lived has shown a clearer or more definite knowledge of human character than Mr. Irving in this part. It is a masterpiece of acting, fitted to rank with the highest ideals. Those who are not *en rapport* with Mr. Irving's idea of Shylock are simply blinded by what they have seen before. Those who can, and will, recognise the truth must admit this characterisation one of the most impressive known to the stage." The same critic describes Miss Terry as "at once the most graceful, the most tender, the most charming Portia this generation has seen."

Later in April, Sir Henry Irving paid return visits to Philadelphia and Boston, where he was received with quite as much enthusiasm as before. In the latter city he had a novel experience. Owing to a mishap on the railway, some of the costumes for *The Merchant of Venice*, with which he was to open his engagement, did not arrive in time, and the audience had to be sent away disappointed. Mr. Seymour, the manager, made the announcement to them, pointing out that no such thing had occurred at the Tremont Theatre before. No doubt the extra strain put upon the railway officials by the conveyance of such unheard-of scenery and costumes as those of the Lyceum company had for once been a little too much for them. Mr. Bram Stoker, naturally enough, was in extreme distress—in the words of a reporter of the *Boston Journal*, was "flying around like a hen hunting for a lost chicken." Sir Henry Irving, it is stated, retained his characteristic self-possession, although, of course, the delay put him to a very great loss. However, things were all right next evening, when *Macbeth* was played. The engagement, which lasted from April 20th to the 25th inclusive, was in all respects memorable. Notwithstanding differences of opinion as to Sir Henry's conception of *Macbeth*, his performance was greeted with marked warmth, and the house was crowded every night. In a farewell speech he announced his intention of returning to America when he got good new plays.

Next came visits to Providence, Worcester, Springfield, Hartford, and Newhaven. "Henry Irving and Ellen Terry," says the *Springfield Union*, "never received a heartier welcome than they

did last evening at the Court Square Theatre. . . . The audience—and it was an immense and brilliant one—went fairly wild with enthusiasm. It was not the blind idolatry of reputation or personality, but sincere and expressive admiration of talent, living and breathing, and capable of awakening all that was best in the hearts of the people who sat before the footlights. The players were forgotten as individuals, and the people only saw them as the characters they portrayed. It was a tribute to art, an appreciation which was richly deserved. To attempt to describe the scene would be futile. One must imagine it. Picture in your mind's eye an audience filling every seat in the theatre and crowding a part of every aisle on the three floors, and you will have an idea of the number of people present. Then think of such a scene as would exist when people heard of a great victory for the national arms, and you have an idea of the enthusiasm. But there were times when those two thousand people were quiet. There were many scenes in the play when a silence which was almost oppressive fell on the great assemblage. That was admiration in repression, and was no less expressive than the hand-clapping and murmurs which followed some particularly dramatic scene or bit of dialogue. The enthusiasm was contagious, and it had the effect of stimulating the actors to give the very best performance ever witnessed in this city. It will be many a day, perhaps many a year, before such a scene and such a performance are duplicated, and the people who formed a part of last night's audience have a memory which will grow richer and dearer as the years roll by. There may have been greater Shakspearean actors than Mr. Irving; there may, to-day, be players who are his equal in certain lines; but there is no one living or dead who has or had his innate knowledge of dramatic art coupled with his remarkable display of stage-craft. Without doubt he is the greatest master of the English-speaking stage at the present time. His ideals are lofty, and he never recedes. He fixes almost impossible standards, and then labours unceasingly until he reaches them. There is not a branch of dramatic art in which he is not proficient. His is not the superficial knowledge of the imitator, but the grounded education of the student and the originator. He studies causes and effects. He fits every play, every scene, every grouping with as much care as a watchmaker would employ in adjusting the works of a very fine timepiece. In this he stands alone of all actors of the present day. To this careful attention to detail he owes his success; and to him the stage owes more than it does to any man, living or dead. Irving's *Merchant of Venice* is unquestionably the most perfect interpre-



tation of this play that has ever been made. He has actually reincarnated Shylock, and one cannot help offering a cup of the 'milk of human kindness' to the unlucky and generally despised usurer."

Early in May, Sir Henry Irving reappeared at Abbey's Theatre, New York, for a two weeks' farewell engagement. He had what the *Spirit of the Times* calls "an Irving audience—that is to say, such a crowded, intellectual, and fashionable assemblage as only Irving can attract." The repertory during the fortnight included *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Louis XI.*, *King Arthur*, *The Lyons Mail*, *The Story of Waterloo*, *Godefroi and Yolande*, (here, too, well received), and *The Bells*. *Macbeth*, says the *Evening Post*, "never has been set upon the stage in a manner so completely satisfactory to the eye and the understanding. For once the preternatural apparitions are introduced with awe-inspiring effect, amid fitting accompaniments of darkness and storm, without any clumsy revelation of the stage trickery to which they owe their impressiveness. From first to last the representation is charged with the spirit of poetry and tragedy. In almost every way the achievement is extraordinary, and no intelligent lover of the stage should fail to witness it." In the view of the *Sun*, Miss Ellen Terry's Lady Macbeth, in its departure from the treasured traditions of the stage, at some points comes nearer to the dramatist's intention. The engagement ended on the night of the 16th of May. "If," Sir Henry said in his farewell address, "in the future I have any work that I believe would be interesting and acceptable, my desire would be to put it before you. The gentle and sweet courtesies we have met with fill us with an eager desire to meet you once again. After all there is but the sea between us, while a firm bond unites us—a common love of our dramatic art." And so came to a close the most striking and successful tour that any English player has ever had in the United States. "Their departure," the *New York Herald* says of the company, "is a distinct loss to the American stage. All that they have undertaken here has been admirable alike in aim and accomplishment. Their influence on the local stage has been thoroughly good, at a time when the tendency was toward lower, not higher, planes of dramatic work. We can ill afford to lose them now, and shall say good-bye with sincere regrets."

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Other theatrical attractions in New York are not numerous. The new comic opera by Mr. Charles Klein and Mr. John Philip Sousa was heralded by a flourish of trumpets, very appropriate to

the work of "the march king." *El Capitan*, on its first production in Boston, gave rise to a curious diversity of opinion. The critics evidently wavered between their inner conviction that *El Capitan* was a mediocre piece of work on the one hand, and their patriotic desire to praise extravagantly the work of the favourite composer of the hour on the other. This feeling, too, was very apparent on the New York production at the Broadway Theatre. There were, of course, one or two stirring marches in the score, but in sentimental music, and in graceful dance music, Mr. Sousa was a hopeless failure. The opera will succeed far more by the excellence of its libretto, and by the exceptionally clever comedy of Mr. De Wolf Hopper and Mr. Alfred Klein, than by its much-vaunted music. At the Garrick Theatre, Mr. Ralph Lumley's *Thoroughbred* has been tried, but with indifferent success. A run of four weeks has been obtained by *The Village Postmaster*, a comedy by Miss Alice Ives and Mr. Jerome Eddy, at the Fourteenth Street Theatre. The play deals with a phase of life which lends itself to poetic rather than to dramatic treatment, and which, moreover, is not understood in these *fin de siècle* days. The quiet pastoral life of New England in the fifties is now forgotten. Twenty-five years ago *The Village Postmaster* would have run through a whole season. Mr. John Hare made his final appearance in America for the time being at Abbey's Theatre upon the week preceding the Irving engagement. He played in *Old Cronies* and *A Pair of Spectacles*, and was received each night in a manner that will cause him to look forward to his appearance in New York next season at the Garrick Theatre with the keenest pleasure.

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## Echoes from the Green Room.

LONDON will be more like itself by the end of May, as Sir Henry Irving, refreshed and buoyant after his long American tour, fatiguing as it must often have been, expects to arrive home by the 30th of the month. After a short rest he goes on a provincial tour, returning to the Lyceum in September.

DURING his stay in Philadelphia, Sir Henry Irving delivered his lecture on *Macbeth* to a full gathering of the Contemporary Club, as also many other friends, at the Academy of Fine Arts. Here, as elsewhere, it was remarked that he might find the platform as profitable as he does the stage.

SIR HENRY IRVING was the recipient of a remarkable tribute at Philadelphia. One morning he found the following letter on his table:—"The dramatic company of Signora Eleanora Duse, inspired by your lofty art, hold it a duty, to which is added the personal delight, to express to you their sense of high admiration and gratitude for having revealed to the minds of aliens, through your great talent and by the proud flights of your genius, the sweet idioms of your Shakspeare. They pray you further to present to Miss Ellen Terry, your valued and worthy comrade, the homage of their respectful admiration.—Eleanora Duse, Carlo Rosaspina, Ettore Mazzanti, Antionetta Bertoldo, Antonio Galliani, Giuseppina Solazzi, R. de Goudron, Ciro Galvani, G. Magazzari Galliani, Silvio Bonivento, Gilda Bonivento, Dante Capelli, Nora Ropolo, Napoleone Bianco, Alfredo Geri, A. Giordano Pero, Nicola Cortesi."

THE *Protector*, of Chicago, dealing with Sir Henry Irving's *Macbeth* lecture, which he repeated at Columbia College in April, makes a suggestion by no means undeserving of his attention. "Certainly," says the magazine, "he shows that he is a thinking critic, which is, as far as critics go now-a-days, a very rare kind of critic indeed; and he could do no greater favour to the thinking and really critical portion of the reading public than to give us in book form his conception of other famous Shakspearean personages." Such a work, the writer adds, "would find thousands upon thousands of readers wherever the English language is spoken or read." No doubt this is true, though the interest of his remarks on *Hamlet*, the character with which his name will always be associated, might be discounted by the article he contributed to the *Nineteenth Century* in 1877. By the way, the *Protector* speaks of the *Macbeth* address as containing passages that "would do credit to the literary ability of any living author."

AN interesting account of Madame Patti's life at Craig-y-Nos is given by Mr. Howard Paul in the New York *Musical Age*. "It is often asked," says the writer, "why Madame Patti should elect to bury herself in such a distant part of the country as South Wales when so many beautiful estates could have been purchased in more accessible spots—for instance, in Surrey, or Kent, or even in the Midlands. The answer is that the great singer selected South Wales for a permanent home because the peculiarities of the atmosphere suited her health and voice. She felt better, breathed more freely, and sang more serenely there than she did anywhere else. At one time she used to spend her summer holidays at a place called Neath, where she felt restored after a period of travel and hard work. One day she heard of Craig-y-Nos. She paid it several visits, liked it, bought it, and improved it to such an extent that it is now a palace in the great Welsh wilderness.



"ONE of Madame Patti's fads is pets. Having no children, she makes pets of birds and animals, and she has a penchant for parrots. She will not own up on this point, but her husband declares in private that she gave a thousand pounds (one of her night's earnings, in fact) for a parrot of lovely plumage, 'Jumbo,' which certainly is an astonishing talker, with a wonderfully human voice and an actor-like talent for imitation. I told her the old anecdote of the bird that was taken to a parrot show in New York, and after gazing around on his feathered brethren, cried aloud, 'What a h— of a lot of parrots.' She immediately avowed 'she would have given a hundred pounds for that bird, as he would have been such an intelligent companion for Jumbo.' A bird rather educated to profanity (his mistress bought him of a sailor in South America) is discreetly kept in the background, and is only brought out on special occasions. Madame Patti says this parrot can swear like a trooper in six languages, and that if he lived with the other birds he would corrupt their morals. Jumbo is especially and quickly imitative, and she desires that the vocabulary of her great favourite may not be sullied by bad examples.

"MADAME PATTI is a genial hostess. Although past fifty years of age, she is still blooming, *distinguée, piquante*, and has a pleasant face, brightened up by a witty mind. 'I am getting on in years,' she said to me one day, as I had known her from the time of her début at Covent Garden. 'Yes, I may say I *have* got on, for have I not crossed the half-century line? It sounds an awful age, does it not, for a singer?' I was tempted to quote the saying attributed to Victor Hugo—'Fifty is a better age than forty,' for, while the latter is the old age of youth, fifty is the youth of old age.' The diva smiled, and replied: 'Well, no matter; thank Heaven, I feel like five-and-twenty,' and she looked it as she spoke. Nothing annoys Madame Patti more than the stories which have been circulated by gossipers that she spends so much of her time taking care of her voice that she does not enjoy the good things of this life. This is far from the truth. I do not suppose there is a prima-donna in the wide world who has to practise less in order to keep her voice in flexible condition. There are occasions, just before she is to sing an exacting rôle, when she denies herself other things besides eating and drinking. It is impossible to induce her to talk much several hours before she sings. She sees no one then but her maid, who is sympathetically silent, and is answered in monosyllables. But when the work is finished no one is gayer in heart, or brighter in spirits, or more thoroughly appreciative of the good things about, than the *châtelaine* of Craig-y-Nos.

"MADAME PATTI shows herself to her guests at mid-day. Lunch is served at half-past twelve, and a very substantial meal it is. Madame Patti is not a great eater, but she engages a *chef* who knows his business. She detests great joints, affects dainty French dishes, and her wines are the finest France can produce. The dinner hour at the castle is seven o'clock; and here is a *menu* prepared for a party of twelve people, including the host and hostess:

Croûte au pot.  
Petites Timbales Brillat-Savarin.  
Turbot, Sauce Hollandaise.  
Suprême de Volaille Lucullus.  
Foie-gras de Strasbourg en Bellevue.  
Céleri à la Moëlle.  
Bécassines Rôties, Salade de Laitue.  
Gelée, Glâces.  
Fruits. Café.

After dinner our hostess lit a cigarette, and blew out the filmy clouds with the graceful ease of a Spanish *senorita*."

FROM time to time it becomes necessary to reject stories which the world have been led to regard as absolutely true. One of these is to the effect that when Moscow was in flames, Napoleon found time, between two *ordres de guerre*, to draw up a decree organising the Comédie Française. In point of fact, as a discovery in the national archives now shows, the decree had long previously been prepared, been signed before the Emperor reached Moscow, and was at once sent to Paris with instructions that it should be dated from that city. Napoleon, as we all know, was not above a little weakness for theatrical display.

THE death of the Shah recalls to mind an interesting incident in stage history. During his first visit to this country, in 1873, he was caricatured in a piece at the Opéra Comique, even to the extent of being introduced with a string of pawn-tickets round his neck. Down came the irate Lord Chamberlain upon the management for what was undoubtedly a breach of good taste, and Mr. Corrie, who represented his majesty, had to present an entirely different appearance.

*Sarah Bernhardt, Artist and Woman*, is the title of a little book lately brought out in America by Mr. A. L. Ranney, with a letter by the actress herself. In this she pleads for an American Conservatoire—that is, a strictly national institution, controlled by the Government, where preferment, as far as is possible in this world, would come solely from artistic merit to the student. “Many of your men and women,” she says, “need only a little training to become good artists. How is it that there are not here a few rich and influential people to found a Conservatoire? I write this appeal for the sake of the American stage, which could and ought to support itself. I make it on behalf of American literature and of American authors, some of whom, in spite of their real and striking talent, cannot get their plays interpreted. I make it in the name of the public, which is longing to applaud its own writers.”

MME. SARAH BERNHARDT will open her London season on June 8th at the Comedy Theatre.

MR. WILLARD leaves for America next November, to return in the following June.

It is understood that Mr. Tree will open his new theatre with *Julius Cæsar*.

*For the Crown*, at the Lyceum, is to be followed on June 3rd by *Magda*, an English version by Mr. L. N. Parker of Herr Sudermann's *Heimat*.

MR. AND MRS. KENDAL are anxious to produce Mr. Sydney Grundy's play, *The Greatest of These*, in London, but have not yet been able to secure a theatre.

MR. HERMAN MERIVALE, we are delighted to hear, has recovered from his long illness. Under the title of *The Queen's Proctor*, he has adapted *Divorçons* for Mr. Bouchier, who also intends to produce a two-act play, *The Roll Call*, by Mr. W. L. Courtney. It is understood that Miss Violet Vanbrugh is to be the heroine of Mr. Merivale's *Charlotte Corday*.

MR. FRANK COOPER will be the Leonatus in the coming revival of *Cymbeline* at the Lyceum.

MISS NETHERSOLE has arrived in London from New York, but will go back towards the end of the year.

MR. WALTER POLLOCK's article in our present issue on “Stage Swordsmanship” has peculiar interest and value, since, in the words of *Men of the Time*, he is known to be one of the very best fencers in England. The

fact may be overlooked by some, as, with a few exceptions, he has confined the exhibitions of his skill in this way to private life.

MISS NANCY MCINTOSH has just related the story of her first appearance in London. It was Mr. W. S. Gilbert who discovered her. He heard her sing at a private concert, and, happening to need a new prima donna at the Savoy, asked her to allow Sir Arthur Sullivan to pass judgment on her voice. Miss McIntosh sang "Orpheus and his Lute," Sir Arthur's earliest song, before the composer. He was delighted, not only at hearing his old song, but with Miss McIntosh's fresh, rich voice. Said Mr. Gilbert, "You will sing the principal soprano rôle in *Utopia Limited*. You have a fine speaking voice, and I'll wager you'll be quick to learn how to act." Mr. Gilbert took Miss McIntosh home to his wife at Harrow. He coached her carefully and patiently, and, as he had predicted, his pupil was quick, alert, and pliable. "Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert are charming people," says Miss McIntosh. "Since my first appearance in *Utopia Limited*, I have lived with them almost constantly. They are very fond of string instruments, and I am always strumming my guitar. One day Mr. Gilbert said: 'I know what I'm going to make you in my next opera. You shall be a ballad singer.' So in *His Excellency* he made Christina a picturesque street singer, forever accompanying herself on a guitar. Mr. Gilbert is very kind and patient at rehearsals. I have heard a good deal about his hot temper, but I never saw any evidence of it. I like the character and the lines of Christina, but I loathe the music."

THE laurels he has won as a pianist are not enough for M. Paderewski, who has just finished an extremely successful tour in America. He is composing an opera on a Sepoy subject, with the Carpathian mountains as its background. Two acts are finished, and the rest will soon be ready. The work will first appear at Dresden. The composer, after a brief stay in London, will take a long rest in the south of France, afterwards going to the East.

YET another story in which Paderewski's name figures. It seems that a young hopeful, *etat*. 4, who comes of a musical family, was present during a conversation after dinner about the virtuoso. "Oh," he at length burst out, "I know about P-P-aderewsky. There's three brothers of them, and one's Johnderesky, and the other's Edwarderesky, and the other's Paderesky!"

ONE of the most recent acquisitions to the National Portrait Gallery is a plaster bust, painted like life, and probably modelled by Roubiliac, of Colley Cibber. It was formerly in the Strawberry Hill collection, having been presented to Horace Walpole by a brother of Mrs. Clive, to whom it had been sent by Cibber himself.

IN the new magazine, *To-morrow*, a Mr. "Stanley Jones," who is understood to have been unsuccessful on the stage, protests against "the rising aspirations of actors and actresses," and deplors the fact that such aspirations are encouraged by society. It is certain that the theatrical profession now includes a large number of well-born and highly-educated men and women, and that their claim to be regarded as artists are obtaining a wider recognition. With Mr. Jones it may be a case of sour grapes; his writing, at any rate, does not suggest that he has got what Thackeray would have called a "lodgment in the higher social stratum." However, it is needless to take him at all seriously, especially as, in addition to furnishing examples of false logic, he finds it compatible with his manhood to "make war upon women." It is a pity that the Queen was not



aware of Mr. Jones's views a year or more ago ; otherwise, no doubt, she would not have bestowed, even at the instance of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Rosebery, a knighthood upon the head of the profession thus assailed.

BESIDES Mr. Sant's portrait, already spoken of here, of Miss Dorothea Baird, the Royal Academy has a remarkable picture, by Mr. Edwin Abbey, of the strange wooing in *Richard III.* of Lady Anne.

THE Shakspearean celebration at Stratford-on-Avon gives rise to a curious reflection. It is undoubtedly true, as one of the speakers pointed out, that more Americans than Londoners make pilgrimages to that Mecca. On the other hand, it has been reserved for an American manager, Mr. Augustin Daly, to prove that the race of impudent and silly mutilators of Shakspeare is not yet extinct, as his reduction of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to the level of a variety entertainment is enough to show.

ODDLY enough, it was by a dinner to this Mr. Daly, instead of a special performance, that the resuscitated New York Shakspeare Society commemorated the anniversary of the poet's birth. Mr. Clement Scott, as one of Mr. Daly's most ardent champions, naturally beams with delight at the spectacle. But what does the independent and more thinking of the American papers say on the subject ? The *New York Spirit* describes Mr. Daly as one who "has mutilated Shakspeare's plays to suit the capacity of his favourite actress, and who has been condemned for his alterations and transpositions by the best Shakspearean critics of London and New York." "If," it adds, "this be good ground for a banquet, why not give one to commemorate the fame of Colley Cibber ?"

It is not only by the *Spirit* that Mr. Daly's tampering with Shakspeare is regarded in an unfavourable light. The *Tammany Times*, a Democratic weekly paper in New York, speaking recently of *Romeo and Juliet* at Daly's Theatre in that city, said that "for a wonder the text was unmarred by any Daly adaptation" "Seldom," it added, "has a Shakspearean play received such careful and studied attention in this city." We rejoice at this sign of grace. There is hope for Mr. Daly after all.

By the way, Mr. Scott has reprinted, in a volume entitled *From The Bells to King Arthur*, the accounts he has given of Sir Henry Irving's work at the Lyceum since 1871. On the whole, though marked by an appreciative tone, they tend to confirm rather than weaken an opinion already expressed in these pages—namely, that he is a ready, fairly well-informed, and often most effective descriptive reporter, but is not a dramatic critic rightly so-called. Mr. Scott lacks the judicial faculty ; he has a weakness for extreme views one way or the other, and is apt at times to be a little hysterical. To do him justice, he is not unaware of the shortcomings of these notices. "Most of them," he writes, "have been dashed off at high speed and pressure between midnight and half-past one the next morning. Some of them have been written after a night's restless and fitful sleep, with that ever-worrying 'first sentence' ringing in my ears. I do not profess to call any of them criticisms. They are the best newspaper reports that I could give in the time allotted to me." And as hurriedly-written reports they are really astonishing achievements ; but it must be pointed out that many of Hazlitt's criticisms, which *are* criticism, were produced under not far more favourable conditions. Not a few first-night notices of our own time, too, rise high above the level of "the best newspaper reports," though they have to be finished by 1.30 a.m. or a little later. For the rest, Mr. Scott claims that the earlier articles are "the first specimens of a style of picturesque reporting in connection with the

drama—a style of comment which has since found favour with almost every journal, not only in London and the provinces, but over the wide world.” Possibly we may return to the book in another issue; meanwhile we confidently recommend it as a valuable record.

THE complimentary benefit to Miss Kate Vaughan will take place on the afternoon of Tuesday, June 9th, at the Gaiety Theatre. Miss Vaughan’s position at the present moment is an extremely distressing one, we are officially informed. Ill health has prevented her from appearing on the stage during the last eighteen months, and it is only too sadly probable that she will never be able to act again. If it were possible for her to take a sea voyage, and reside for some length of time in a warm climate, it is believed that an ultimate recovery might be the result; she is, however, unfortunately debarred by lack of means from any plan of this nature.

No reader of *Bleak House* is likely to forget Tom-All-Alone’s, the old graveyard to the south of Drury Lane Theatre—“a hemmed-in yard, pestiferous and obscure, where malignant diseases are communicated by the dead to the living.” Within the last two or three years it has been converted into a paved playground for children, but the old iron gate by which it was entered, and in front of which, with her hand round one of its bars, Lady Dedlock died, was suffered to remain. Do not be surprised to hear that this gate itself is to be seen on the Drury Lane stage in the present revival of *Jo*, the adaptation of Dickens’s great story.

IN *The Theatre* last month there was a paragraph imputing to the Green Room Club the expression of an opinion as to a particular dramatic criticism in the *Daily Telegraph*. The committee wish us to state that the Club entirely repudiates the allegation, which, we may add, was avowedly copied from a contemporary, although, owing to an inadvertent omission of quotation marks, this was not made fully apparent at the time.

ONE of our most valued contributors writes to us:—“Miss Anderson, no doubt, exaggerates to some extent the disadvantages of a stage career. But this is purely a matter of temperament. It has sometimes been made a reproach to Miss Anderson, notably by Mr. Davenport Adams in the May number of *The Theatre*, that she underrated the dignity of her profession. This is not, to my thinking, a just reproach. There are some natures which, when once the glamour of a stage career has worn off, shrink, like Edwin Booth, though he was far from being ‘weary of his profession,’ ‘from the glare and excitement of public life, which,’ as he said, ‘were always distasteful to me.’ While there are many who contentedly bear and even delight in ‘the incessant turmoil of the theatre,’ natures of less robust fibre, while losing none of their love for the drama, come gradually to dislike the practice of their art under the conditions which in these days prevail. For them ‘Il en coute trop cher pour briller dans le monde.’”

MR. HERMAN KLEIN has returned to London from New York, whither he went to see the first performance of *El Capitan*.

THE delightful river-trips organised by Mr. Godfrey Brewer, of Eel Pie Island, which were in such favour with the jaded player last summer, will be repeated this season, the start taking place at half-past eleven every morning from Richmond bridge.

*Shoreacres*, the well-known American play, is again being thought of for production in London. This time it is Mr. R. G. Knowles who is considering it.

MR. EDWIN O. SACHS, the well-known architect, has just published the

first of three elaborate and valuable volumes on "Modern Opera Houses and Theatres." The completed work will contain 220 large plates and 500 diagrams of the principal European theatres. There will be much in it pertaining to the development of opera and drama, and the circumstances in which theatres exist, together with full particulars as to their regulations, finances, and requirements in different countries.

MUCH activity is to be noticed at the Comédie Française. *Hamlet* is in preparation; M. Worms is about to play Orgon in *Tartuffe*, and M. Louis Delannay, the famous Delannay's son, will soon be seen as Alceste in the *Misanthrope*. The next new pieces will probably be *L'Evasion*, by M. Eugène Brioux, and *Frédégonde*, by M. Alfred Dubont. Elaborate scenery, in which the influence of Mr. Alma Tadema is rather plainly shown, is in preparation for the latter. Among the new pieces to be read by the committee are *Henry VIII.*, a five-act drama in verse, by MM. Silvestre and Dois, and *Conte d'Hiver*, an adaptation of Shakspeare's *Winter's Tale*, by M. Bouchinet.

M. THEODORE DUBOIS has succeeded the late M. Thomas as director of the Conservatoire for five years, M. Massenet having declined an invitation to be nominated for the post.

It is proposed to make M. Massenet's *Hérodiade*, originally produced in Brussels in 1882, a part of the repertory of the Paris Opéra.

M. LECOCQ, too silent of late, has finished a new opera, *Ninette*. Report speaks of it as not unworthy of the composer of *La Fille de Madame Angot*.

M. SARCEY speaks out boldly against the latest development in Parisian amusements—the "undressing" pieces. "It is the fault of the public," he says. "Would managers give us plays in which undressing takes the place of wit if they had not found that the public patronizes at present only shameless exhibitions of indecency? I am waiting impatiently for the time, which seems to be near at hand, when pornography (the word must be ugly when the thing is ugly) will disgust Parisians and will reign no more in our theatres. The time has come to take a broom in our hands and clean out our Augean stables. Everything has its day. Nudity and indecency have had theirs. Away with them to the sewers!"

M. ABEL HERMANT's new play, *La Meute*, at the Paris Renaissance brought about a duel between the author and the Prince de Sagan, a venerable beau, who fancied that the piece reflected upon his family. Four shots were exchanged at twenty paces, but without effect. M. Hermant has fought several other duels in defence of his outspoken plays.

Mlle. LEJEUNE, of Brussels, is going to the Opéra Comique for three years.

MADAME MANCHESI's memoirs, which abound in anecdotes of contemporary singers, are almost ready for the printer.

PRINCE BISMARCK loves particular operas, but does not care for music generally. "I know too little of music," he said to a correspondent some weeks ago, "to appreciate it at its right value. But I would not give that"—this with a snap of his huge fingers—"for a home without it."

HERE is a slightly altered version of the story as to how Wagner married the divorced wife of Hans Von Bulow. "Master," said the latter one day to the former, for whom he had the deepest reverence, "I wish to make you a little present. I have noticed your affection for my wife. Take her; she is yours. I am proud to think that I have something worthy of your acceptance." In the result a divorce was obtained, and the marriage took place. "You know," Bulow pleasantly remarked in after years to a friend, "that Wagner married my widow."



HARDLY too soon, a statue of Mozart has been set up in the Albrechts Platz, Vienna. The Court, the official world, and all that is best in the city were represented at the unveiling.

DURING his recent visit to Vienna, it is understood, Sir Augustus Harris was anything but favourably impressed by Herr Goldmark's *Cricket on the Hearth*, which is not likely to be seen in London.

SIR AUGUSTUS HARRIS has, it is reported in Vienna, secured the rights for England and America of the operetta, *Der Wunderknabe* (*The Prodigy*), of which an account was published in *The Theatre* last month.

MORE honours for the stage. Madame Judic, who played lately in Servia, has received from the King the Cross of the Order of St. Sawwa. It is rumoured, by the way, that before long she may reappear in London.

SIGNOR LEONCAVALLO has been made Commendatore of the Crown by the King of Italy.

SIGNOR CAGNONI died lately at Bergamo, at the age of sixty-eight. In addition to church music, he composed many comic operas, one of which, *Don Bucefalo*, produced when he was only nineteen, has obtained a good deal of success.

SIGNOR PUCCINI'S *Vie de Bohême* has achieved conspicuous success in Rome, increased prices notwithstanding. As may be supposed, the libretto is founded upon Henri Mürger's novel, which created so great an effect in Paris that he could never thereafter cross the Pont des Arts.

WE are getting on. Early in May, Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*, translated by M. Eckhoud, so prominently identified with the "Young Belgian" literary movement, was played at the Communal Theatre of Brussels by amateurs, under the auspices of the socialist club known as the Maison du Peuple.

MR. MANSFIELD still talks of giving up the stage for the lecture platform, but has one or two new plays in rehearsal. A lady once wrote to an intimate friend: "I feel that I am not long for this world, and I am O, so willing to die; but I must have my black satin gown trimmed with the real Russian sable, and you must send me a coat to match at once as capes are now going out of fashion."

MRS. POTTER'S recent performance of *Juliet* in New York was so adversely criticised by the press that she has expressed a determination not to reappear in that city. "At the close of my engagement," she said, "I shall leave America for Australia, Samoa, Madagascar, Kamschatka, New Zealand, St. Helena, or any other habitable spot on the face of the globe where human beings exist to witness theatrical representations."

SOME of the New York dramatic critics must have had a *mauvais quatre d'heure* of late. In various parts of the United States their shortcomings have been pointed out. "Dramatic criticism," says the *New York Mirror*, "is held in contempt by the serious-minded public, which has ceased to rely upon guidance from that source in selecting its amusements. There are several newspapers here that treat the stage seriously and intelligently. Earnest and honest critics are employed by the *Sun*, *Times*, *Tribune*, *World*, *Press*, *Evening Post*, and one or two others. But earnestness and honesty are not the sole requisites of dramatic criticism. There is demanded also breadth of mind, trained judgment, freedom from prejudice, and sympathy with the higher aims of the American stage. Foreigners, as a rule, are disqualified from expressing opinions of any great value concerning native dramatic effort; their point of view is strange to the American mind, and their bias is in favour of art manifestations that are wholly

exotic. Unfortunately, aliens of this class are engaged in reviewing the drama for several of our most widely-circulated newspapers. The result is that our plays and actors are judged by them from the irrelevant standards of London, Paris and Berlin. A worse evil than un-Americanism, however, is found in the preposterous plan adopted by several newspapers of paying their 'critics' commissions on theatre advertisements in lieu of salaries. This nefarious arrangement has led to gross scandals, the most conspicuous of which is the frequent recurrence of incidents that smack unmistakably of blackmail."

MR. WILTON LACKAYE, so famous in America as Svengali, was born in Loudoun County, Virginia. His early inclinations were to enter the priesthood. For two years he was a student at Ottawa, and then went for four years to the Georgetown University. He became seriously stage-struck, but was persuaded by his father to go to Washington to study law. His legal studies, however, proved too uncongenial for him; and he became an actor. He had been several years on the stage before he was called upon to originate Svengali.

LITTLE did he anticipate the effect that *Trilby* has produced in America. He liked his part, but thought that it would be greatly overshadowed by Trilby. The idea of the death-scene effect at the end of the third act was entirely his. Originally Svengali faced the audience throughout the scene. By keeping his back to the audience he kept the ghastly pallor of the face unseen until the man was dying. The idea of introducing Svengali as a living picture in the last act originated with Mr. Beerbohm Tree, and was not done by Mr. Lackaye except for one or two performances, when, it seems, the new piece of business was discouraged in the most unequivocal manner by the audience.

SIGNOR FOLI was recently in New York on his way to Tacoma, where he will henceforward live.

*Shamus O'Brien* will be heard in America next season.

THE death is announced of Mr. Stetson, the American theatrical manager and newspaper proprietor. Among the attractions he secured for New York were Signor Salvini, Madame Modjeska, and several of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, one only of which, *Ruddigore*, proved unsuccessful in his hands. He is survived by his wife, *née* Stokes, formerly a circus equestrienne. It is understood that he leaves about \$400,000.

THE versatile and amiable Baron de Grimm died lately in New York. As the *Spirit of the Times* remarks, he had distinguished himself as a soldier, a journalist, an artist, a stage manager, a cartoonist, and the art director of the Eden Musée. Born in the Imperial palace at St. Petersburg, where his German father was the tutor of the royal family, he was splendidly educated at the French College in Berlin, and was made lieutenant in the Emperor's Guards. At Gravelotte he won the Iron Cross for personal bravery. Already his artistic instincts had asserted themselves, and in America, where he presently established himself, he won a \$1000 prize for a political cartoon. He loved theatrical work, and often designed scenes and assisted at rehearsals.

It is announced that Mrs. Henry Abbey, once well known to English and American playgoers as Miss Florence Gerard, intends to return to the stage, from which she retired about ten years ago.

THE theatres in Sydney and Melbourne continue to do well. One of the latest productions has been *The Yeoman of the Guard*, in which Mr. Courtice Pounds and other members of the Williamson comic opera company appear. *Trilby* will soon be given in Sydney.









